

Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 51:

I returned to my suite after my meeting with the MP.

I poured a measure of the whisky exclusive to Kingfisher Park, letting it clear my head. Kai Parker, my business secretary, waited until I had finished the drink before asking, “What time would you like me to schedule the next meeting with Sir Donovan, boss?”

I tapped a finger against the armrest. I felt no particular eagerness to meet with Donovan again.

Having spent considerable time with the Wall Street crowd, I found the native London approach to business meetings a jarring contrast to the Americans’ fast, direct, and sometimes brash style.

Matt Donovan, the MP, had devoted the first fifteen minutes entirely to rugby, as if it were somehow rude to launch straight into the deal. Despite this being our second meeting, no decision had been reached. He seemed to believe his inherited baronetcy not only guaranteed him the deal, but also entitled him to more than his fair share of the proceeds.

“Remind me again in a week,” I said.

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Kai nodded.

“How is the hiring progressing?”

He consulted his tablet. “HR has received over six hundred applications for the Chief of Staff position. They have eliminated roughly half through résumés and written interviews and are in the process of inviting the shortlisted candidates for a first-round panel interview. They will have a list of names for you in three days.”

I almost asked if one of the résumés belonged to Hyacinth Galloway, but I stopped myself.

If she was serious about the job, she would submit her application.

If she was not, well, I knew where she lived, and our paths would cross again eventually.

Thinking about her, my thoughts naturally turned to Mayfair Global.

My intelligence indicated that Hyacinth was on the rise there, already holding a major position, third in the chain of command. She had a bright future.

Why would she leave Mayfair so suddenly, and even be willing to take a lower position as a Chief of Staff?

If something had occurred to alienate her from the company, would she be willing to share some insider knowledge about how Mayfair operated if I asked her nicely?

I swirled the glass of whisky, staring out at the rolling parkland beyond the window.

A new broom sweeps clean, and as the new CEO of Velos Capital, what better way to establish my authority than by defeating Velos's largest competitor, Mayfair Global?

A knock came at the door. Roy entered and discreetly coughed at Kai, who frowned in response. I caught the exchange. "What is it?"

Roy looked awkward. "Well, um, boss, you have a meeting at eight p.m."

Kai interjected, "I did not schedule any meeting for eight p.m."

Roy clarified, “It is a private meeting, not business.”

Kai looked at Roy, who stressed the word “private” with heavy emphasis. A flash of understanding passed between them. Kai nodded.

Before he left the room, Roy winked at me. “Enjoy your evening.”

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Chapter 52:

He didn’t know who Hyacinth was; he assumed I was merely meeting a woman who had once tried to obtain my measurements.

Add in the location—a high-end private suite—and the time, eight in the evening, and he had reached the inevitable conclusion that the meeting was of a personal nature.

I did not bother correcting him.

My phone chimed with a new message: [I have arrived at the hotel, I’m at

I frowned at the final word. HRKP?

What did that mean?

The hotel's suites and rooms were numerically designated, not named with letters.

I hit dial.

It kept ringing and ringing, until finally—

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"Miss Galloway?"

She did not speak, but there was definitely someone on the line.

I activated the speaker and listened carefully. I could hear footsteps—soft treads on carpet—movement, and laboured breathing.

Then came the sound of a door softly clicking open.

But no one was speaking.

I pulled up the typing pad on my phone and entered HRKP. When I saw the autocorrected result, I immediately called the front desk.

"Has a Miss Hyacinth Galloway arrived at the hotel?"

"One moment, sir." The sound of keyboard clacking followed, then: "Yes, sir. A Miss Galloway arrived about half an hour ago and left a garment bag with the front desk."

"Where is she now?"

"I am not sure, sir."

Check the surveillance cameras in the lobby.

"Um." The front desk clerk hesitated. "I am afraid I cannot do that, sir. Hotel regulations."

I hung up, then called the owner of the hotel directly. "I need a favour," I said the moment he picked up. "I require immediate access to your hotel's surveillance feeds."

He didn't ask why.

A message arrived half a minute later with a link to a VMS portal.

When I saw what happened in the lobby, I sprang to my feet.

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Chapter 53:

The room was dimly lit.

I had been thrown onto a large bed.

Seven or eight men stood around, wrapped in towels, their gazes lecherous and vile. Beside the bed was an array of medical supplies, including syringes and needles.

A profound, primal fear made me tremble uncontrollably. I tried to push myself up, but my arm gave way, and I collapsed back onto the mattress.

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I shook my head, scrambling backwards on the bed, my legs kicking weakly against the sheets. “No... please... don’t...”

The men muttered amongst themselves.

“What a stunner.”

“Her man’s heart must be made of stone, handing over a beauty like this for us to break.”

“Not just break. He wants the whole thing filmed, too.”

Their words hit my brain like a physical blow. Cary?

No—impossible.

Frantically, I pulled out my phone, fumbling and dropping it several times before I finally managed to grip it. I had to call Cary. I had to hear him deny it.

A few of the men moved to take the phone from me, but the woman in the hotel uniform stopped them. “Let her call.”

I huddled in the corner of the bed and dialled Cary’s number.

He hung up on the first call.

He hung up on the second call, too.

My heart grew colder, a piercing, bone-deep pain spreading through me.

On the third attempt, the call finally connected, but the voice that answered wasn't Cary's.

"Can't you take a hint? Cary doesn't want to talk to you."

"You..." I couldn't get the words out.

Vanessa let out a happy, girlish laugh. "How do you like the studs we arranged for you? I'll let you in on a little secret. They're not just into rough stuff. One of them has AIDS. Pray you die tonight, because if you don't, living will be so much worse. And don't think about going to the police. We can crush you like an ant. You don't stand a chance."

I couldn't believe my ears. "Put Cary... on the... phone."

Vanessa ignored me. “You brought this on yourself with your greed. I’ll be honest with you. Cary had this planned from the moment you found out he was cheating. He was just stringing you along until tonight—until he could destroy you. You’ve signed Tanya’s agreement. Once you’re just a common whore in everyone’s eyes, she won’t have to pay you a penny.”

“No... Cary. Put him—”

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Chapter 54:

“Oh, and one more thing. To celebrate, we’re announcing our engagement tomorrow night. Cary and I are getting engaged. How does that feel? I took your man, I took your job, and I’m going to have my happily ever after with Cary. And you? You can’t do a thing except die in agony.”

Vanessa laughed, the sound brimming with smug delight, and then the line went dead. The phone slid from my ear.

Despair, grief, and a towering, all-consuming hatred twisted inside me, shredding my very soul.

The woman on the sofa switched on her phone's camera. "Alright, gentlemen, time to begin. The client was clear. Don't hold back. Break her."

The perverts closed in.

I fought to grab anything to throw at them, but my wrists were tied to the bedposts, my legs were pinned down. And the drug was sapping all the strength from my limbs.

Countless rough hands reached for me, tearing at my clothes. When I saw an ugly, obese man climb onto the bed, a syringe aimed for my thigh, I wanted to die right there and then.

BANG!

The door was flung open with violent force.

The needle point, poised to pierce my skin, froze mid-air.

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The room full of deviants had no time to run before black-clad men stormed in, pinned them to the floor, and dragged them out like sacks of rubbish.

Two women who had entered with the security team immediately covered me with a man's suit jacket and untied my bound wrists. Then they left the room.

Outside the door, I seemed to hear a man's voice, cool, calm, and in control. "How is she?"

One of the women answered, "Her clothes were partially torn, but thankfully nothing else happened."

The other added, "She was terrified when we went in, sir. She tried to bite her own tongue. She calmed down considerably after we covered her with your jacket. She appears delirious and is unable to speak. We saw a dropped syringe on the bed. We're concerned she may have been—"

Another male voice, slightly familiar, said, "Not a single word about tonight is to leave this room. If any rumours surface, I will assume they originated from you."

The two women hastily mumbled reassurances.

I heard faint footsteps entering the room.

I struggled to open my eyes, but the drug's effects seemed to have peaked. My eyelids felt glued shut, utterly immobile. I was trapped inside my own body. I could feel everything, hear everything, but I couldn't react.

Then I felt cold fingertips on my face.

The cold was a relief to the heat raging through my system. Before I knew what I was doing, I leaned into the touch and let out a low moan.

The fingertips paused, then gently wiped away the tears I hadn't realised I was still shedding.

"It's okay. You're safe now. No one will hurt you," I heard a man's voice murmur.

Then I felt myself being lifted.

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Chapter 55:

Long strides, steady arms.

I felt the warmth of those strong arms enveloping me, and a sense of calm—of safety—settled over me. I was placed gently into the back seat of a car.

Whatever hellish drugs those bastards had given me were acting up again.

I was burning up. Part of my body craved an outlet, a release—something to grind against.

But my brain, the little part that remained clear, knew that was the effect of the drugs, that I shouldn't give in.

I didn't want to lose control and turn into the whore they wanted me to be.

I used my weak fingers to pinch my thigh hard, using the sharp pain to force myself to stay conscious.

But even if I could control the lust raging through me, I couldn't control the tears.

I was lying across his lap—I finally saw it was Lochlan Hastings who had saved me—and I couldn't stop crying, my whole body racked with great, wracking sobs.

Multiple emotions warred within me: fear, wrath, relief, lust, gratitude. The conflict was overwhelming, and my mind seemed to shut down.

The car ride became a hazy memory.

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All I remembered was Lochlan's hands on my face, wiping away my tears.

As the car turned a corner, I tipped forward and would have rolled onto the floor if Lochlan hadn't caught me.

He leaned down, and my lips accidentally brushed against his throat.

He paused, then gently hoisted me back onto the seat.

"We're almost there, boss," the driver said from the front. "I've called ahead."

A team of medical professionals was waiting when the car pulled up in front of a hospital.

I was wheeled into an examination room.

Somewhere during the tests, I passed out.

When I came to, my mind was still a confused jumble. I stared up at the white ceiling for a while, the antiseptic smell reminding me where I was.

I tried to sit up, but my body was like a limp rag and my arms had no strength.

"Don't get up."

I turned my head with some effort and saw him.

Lochlan's tailored shirt was wrinkled, his sleeves rolled up, the top few buttons undone.

He looked like he'd been there for some time.

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Chapter 56:

"Mr Hastings." My voice was raspy, hardly recognisable as my own.

"Do you remember what happened?" he asked.

"Yeah, I do." I gave him a faint, bitter smile.

My mind was gradually clearing. Things were fuzzy, but not completely blank.

"Thank you. Seriously, thank you so much." If he hadn't shown up, I might not be alive right now.

Lochlan looked at me, his eyes deep and unreadable. “The good news is, no real harm was done. The aphrodisiac has already been flushed out of your system. The injection you were given in the hallway was just a sedative; it has already worn off. As for that needle in the room, it didn’t touch you. There will be no lasting physical effects.” He paused briefly. “I assume you know who is behind this.”

I lowered my gaze, gripping the blanket tightly in my fists.

Lochlan didn’t press for an answer. “It is partly my fault. If I hadn’t arranged for a meeting at the hotel—”

I cut him off. “It has nothing to do with you.”

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Without him, I would have gone there anyway.

“I still have those men in custody, the ones who attacked you. If you want to report it to the police or handle it privately, the choice is yours.”

“Thank you. You’ve already helped me a lot.” I looked up at him. “I’ll take care of the rest myself.”

“Are you sure you don’t need any help?”

“I’m sure.” I wasn’t, but I already owed him so much I couldn’t keep adding to it.

He was, after all, nothing more than an acquaintance at this point.

Lochlan said nothing.

Right then, the phone on the bedside table rang.

It was mine.

He handed it to me.

I stared at the name on the screen, and my blood boiled with rage.

How could he still have the nerve to call me? Was he checking to see if I was dead?

I stared at the phone so hard I thought it might shatter under the force of my glare. But I picked up eventually.

There was no point running from the inevitable.

“Hello,” I answered.

“What took you so long to answer the phone?” Cary demanded. “Where are you?”

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Chapter 57:

“You sure you’ll be okay on your own?”

Lochlan watched me from the hospital’s front steps. I’d insisted on checking out early that morning, against the doctor’s advice.

“I’ll be fine, thanks.” I managed a weak, polite smile.

“My driver can take you wherever you need to go,” he said.

“Thanks, but I think I’ll just grab a taxi.”

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Again, he gave me that inscrutable look.

We hadn't talked about what happened last night, but I knew he knew. For a man with connections powerful enough to find me in a hotel of over a thousand rooms in a matter of minutes, he must have already figured out who was behind it.

But he never mentioned Cary's name.

"Oh, about the suit," I said, suddenly remembering. "I left it with the hotel front desk. I'm afraid you'll have to send someone to collect it."

"Don't worry about it."

He waited on the kerbside with me until the car I'd called arrived. Just before I got in, he said, "Once you've handled this incident, and if you're still interested in the Chief of Staff position, give me a call."

I was too stunned to reply. By the time I gathered my thoughts, he was long gone.

He wanted me to work for him? After everything he'd witnessed last night—after initially turning me down without even looking at my CV?

At any other time, I would have been thrilled by an offer like that. But now...

I shook my head and gave the driver the address.

Portia opened the door, dark circles shadowing her eyes.

"Rough night?" I said.

"Duh. I didn't sleep a wink after I got your call." She pulled me into a fierce hug, then quickly released me when she heard me hiss in pain. "You okay?"

"Fine. Just a bit sore." I followed her into the living room. After I told her what had happened last night, she was absolutely furious.

"That fucking bastard! He's not a man—he's a fucking animal! A piece of shit! And Vanessa? And that cunt of a mother of his? They're all vile, scheming cunts!"

Portia was so agitated she looked ready to rip Cary's throat out with her bare hands.

"And why the hell did you have me text that prick to say we were clubbing? What were you thinking, not calling him out right then and there?"

I could relate to Portia's anger. When Cary had called me last night, furious and demanding to know where I was, I had wanted to reach through the phone line and strangle him. He and his mistress had almost killed me, almost destroyed me, and he had the nerve to act like nothing had happened? But Lochlan's presence in the hospital room had forced me to calm down.

I had given Cary a poor excuse about being out clubbing with Portia, then texted her to ask for backup, promising to explain everything later.

"I've got a plan," I said. "It's better than confronting them privately."

"What is it?" Portia asked eagerly. "Ricin in the wine? Or a staged car accident? Just name it. I'll help."

"No, nothing so dramatic."

Portia suddenly gasped. She grabbed my wrist. "Your wrist!" She saw the raw, bloody rope burns. "They tied you up? The bastards!"

I withdrew my hand and smiled bleakly. “Yeah. They were following orders, apparently.”

“Vanessa’s or Cary’s?”

“Does it matter?”

“Vanessa being vicious is one thing, but Scary Cary...” Portia shook her head. “Even if he doesn’t love you, did he have to be so brutal? You were together for three years. Three whole fucking years! If there was no love, there should’ve at least been some affection. For a new fling he’s known for barely a month, how could he be so cruel to you?”

I shrugged. “I should’ve listened to you. Should’ve left him sooner.”

“Now’s not too late. You’ve got the divorce papers. It’s a done deal. Don’t tangle yourself with the likes of him anymore. Come with me on a trip. We’ll go somewhere tropical, with sun and beach.”

I shook my head. “Not yet. I’ve got one more thing to do.”

“What?”

“Did you know he and Vanessa are announcing their engagement tonight?”

“What!” Portia sprang up from the sofa, shocked. “You are not even divorced yet! Wait...” A chill of realisation swept over her. “Has he found out you tricked him into signing the divorce papers?”

“I don’t know. Maybe.”

Portia began to pace. “That has to be it. He and his mother were in on it from the start. They were waiting till the last moment to destroy you, so you wouldn’t get the settlement, and they could use the video from last night to blackmail you. You would be too terrified of that video going public to say a word to anyone. It would be a quiet, clean divorce. Your existence as his wife would be wiped away completely. That way, he can be with Vanessa without any complications! Fuck, that man is terrifying!”

What she said made sense, but I couldn’t bring myself to analyse it any further. All I wanted now was revenge.

“Portia, I need you to help me with a few things.”

“Just tell me what to do.”

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Chapter 58:

“I’m ready. Let’s go.”

Vanessa finally emerged from the dressing room after I’d checked my watch for the tenth time. She was dressed... grandly.

Even for a formal black-tie event, it felt excessive: a gown of shimmering pearl-white silk satin, form-fitting with a dramatic train, a full set of diamond jewellery, and her hair done up in a chignon under a fucking tiara.

She looked like she was about to crown herself queen.

“How do I look?” She saw me looking and twirled in front of me.

“Very nice.” I headed for the door. “Come on. We’re late.”

I wouldn’t have brought her if I’d had any other choice. But she’d somehow caught wind of the event and insisted on coming, and I couldn’t get Hyacinth to answer her damn phone.

Thinking of Hyacinth, I checked my phone again.

After my strict warning the last time she went clubbing, it was hard to believe she’d defy me and go out with Portia again. Yet she’d not only done it, she’d stayed out all night. She hadn’t come home, and now she wasn’t even picking up.

What the hell was going on with her?

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That familiar sense of things slipping out of my control—which had become a constant companion lately—settled over me again.

When the car pulled up outside the Montrose Grand, I was still wondering where Hyacinth was and what she was doing.

Vanessa hooked her arm through mine as we entered the ballroom. The charity dinner was hosted by my mother, which was why I had to make an appearance, but I didn't plan to stay long.

The moment I stepped into the ballroom, something felt off.

The place was packed. It seemed half the fucking aristocracy and power players of London were here. The Abrams family had all turned out, including Armond Abrams, who raised his glass to me from a distance. I gave him a curt nod.

All eyes turned to Vanessa and me, and whispers instantly rippled through the crowd. I saw plenty of smiles.

I looked at Vanessa to see if she'd noticed, but she kept her head down, constantly checking her phone.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

Her head snapped up. "Huh? Nothing. Just... waiting for a call."

“Cary!” My mother sailed up to me in a flowing gown. She air-kissed my cheeks, then turned to Vanessa. “Vanessa, you look absolutely stunning! Come, I must talk to you.”

Vanessa smiled at me and then left with my mother. I watched their heads bent close together as they walked away, whispering urgently. Mum seemed to be asking her something, but I had no idea what.

I made small talk with several guests who crowded around, then extracted myself for some air on the terrace.

I tried Hyacinth’s number again. No answer.

I called Jenna. “Has Hyacinth returned home?”

“No, sir, not yet.”

“Call me the moment she arrives.”

“Yes, sir.”

I ended the call, thought about calling Portia again, but decided against it. Our disdain for each other was mutual, and she wouldn’t tell me where Hyacinth was even if she knew.

I returned to the ballroom. More guests had arrived, and the conversational din had risen another notch.

I glanced at my watch.

“Cary!” Vanessa bounced over, holding out a sleek brochure. “This is tonight’s auction catalogue. Help me pick! The pink diamond set is stunning, isn’t it? So unique! And check out this ruby ring.”

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Chapter 59:

She chattered nonstop beside me, all smiles. Her cheeks were flushed, and I smelled alcohol on her breath. The event had barely begun, and she was already tipsy.

I gave the brochure a disinterested glance. “They all look fine.”

My eyes had already moved away when something made me freeze. My gaze snapped back.

That pink diamond set—why did it look so familiar?

“Let me see that,” I said, my voice tight.

“Sure!” Vanessa handed the booklet over enthusiastically.

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I flipped to the page and examined it. There was no mistaking it. I’d flown to Italy myself last year to commission that exact set as a wedding anniversary gift. It was one of a kind.

So how the fuck did it end up here at an auction?

My mind flashed to those cleared-out shelves in Hyacinth's closet and dresser.

Vanessa babbled on. "What do you think? I think the diamond set will go nicely with the collection on page—"

I tossed the brochure back at her. "I need to go."

"What?"

I had to find Hyacinth. I had to ask her why the hell she'd sold my anniversary gift to her.

"Wait!" Vanessa grabbed my arm. "You can't leave! We just got here."

"I've got something to take care of." I tried to shrug her off, but she clung to me like a limpet.

"Whatever it is can wait! You can't leave—tonight's really important!"

“Why?” I looked at her, my patience thinning. “What’s so important?”

“Well... it’s organised by your mother. You wouldn’t want to walk out on her party, would you?”

“She hosts these things all the time. She’s used to it.”

“Wait!”

I scowled at her, my impatience turning to anger.

At that moment, my mother walked onto the podium at the front of the ballroom.

“Look, your mum’s about to make a speech!” Vanessa seized my arm and refused to let go.

“Welcome, ladies and gentlemen,” Mum began in her polished society voice. “Before we start the auction tonight, there’s a wonderful announcement I’d like to share.”

She exchanged a glowing smile with Daphne Abrams, Vanessa’s mother. “My son, Cary Grant, is getting engaged to Miss Vanessa Abrams! Tonight is their engagement party, and to celebrate, I’ve set my heart on winning the most spectacular jewel here as a gift for my future daughter-in-law.”

She beamed at Vanessa.

The entire ballroom erupted into applause.

All eyes were on me and Vanessa, with well-wishes and congratulations coming from all directions.

Vanessa looked like she was about to burst into tears of joy. I, meanwhile, just stood there in stunned silence, my mind completely blank from the shock.

Engaged? To Vanessa? When the fuck did I agree to that? This was insane.

Suddenly, all the noise in the room seemed to fade. All eyes shifted to somewhere behind me.

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Chapter 60:

I felt every eye in the ballroom lock onto me as I entered—curious eyes, judgemental eyes, dismissive eyes.

Vanessa's surprised, hateful gaze.

And Cary's, which was both surprised and deeply displeased.

The whispers started immediately.

I wasn't part of their posh circle, so the society wives didn't bother lowering their voices as I passed.

"Isn't that Mr Grant's wife?"

“You have to say ex-wife now. He’s getting engaged, remember? Tanya’s been talking about it at every afternoon tea for a month.”

I let out a quiet, humourless laugh. So that was why Tanya had been delaying everything—she needed time to stage her perfect reveal. But I didn’t care anymore. I was only here for one thing: my money.

“Is she here to make a scene?” someone whispered again.

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“Oh, and what right does she have to do that?”

“The Grants and the Abrams just announced their engagement. If she’s here to protest, she’ll only humiliate herself.”

Vanessa’s face turned ashen as I walked closer, like she’d just seen a ghost. Tanya Grant didn’t look much better, frozen on the podium.

Cary started toward me.

“Don’t you dare!” Vanessa grabbed his arm, then turned to me, feigning arrogance. “Cary and I are engaged! We’re getting married! Stop harassing him—”

A vein pulsed hard on Cary’s temple. I knew that look; it meant he was about to explode. But with so many eyes on him, he couldn’t.

“Shut up,” he growled under his breath, yanking her hand off his arm.

He started forward again, but a man in a tuxedo stepped in his way. I didn’t know him, but it didn’t matter.

“Cary, calm down,” the man warned quietly. “Are you really going to humiliate my sister in public over that woman?”

“Get out of my way!” Cary snapped.

So he was Vanessa’s brother. Interesting. They’d planned this well.

The murmurs grew louder.

By then, I'd already reached the centre of the ballroom. Passing a table, I casually picked up a glass of red wine.

"What the hell do you think you're doing? Get out right now!" Tanya Grant stormed down from the stage and blocked my path.

Cary finally broke free from the men holding him back. His handsome face was set, cold and resolute, as he stopped in front of me.

"Come home with me. I can explain—"

"No," I cut him off. "In fact, I came to give you and Vanessa my blessing."

"What the hell are you talking about?!" Cary's face darkened. "We're not divorced. I didn't agree to any of this!"

"Oh, but we are," I said evenly, glancing at Tanya before turning back to him.

"You've got to be fucking kidding me," Cary hissed, his voice low and dangerous, eyes burning like he wanted to tear me apart. He must've thought I was delusional. After all, I had tricked him into signing those papers.

I reached into my purse and pulled out the divorce agreement I'd made him sign, holding it up to his face. "Take a good look. Recognise your own handwriting?"

Cary's disbelief deepened, his eyes darting over the page. "What the hell happened?"

"It happened when I caught your face buried in that blonde's tits in your office," I said calmly. "You couldn't sign fast enough."

"You played me?" Cary roared, veins standing out on his neck as his hand shot out and clamped around my throat. "I didn't agree to this! How dare you—"

I slapped at his arm, but only for show. If he kept going, everyone would see exactly what kind of husband he'd been. That alone would win me sympathy—and a cleaner divorce.

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Chapter 61:

Tanya rushed over. “Cary, calm down! Do you want everyone to see you as a CEO who can’t control his temper? Do you even realise how much business you could lose?”

Cary’s grip tightened for a second—then loosened. I shoved him away and coughed violently.

His icy stare pinned me like a knife, but behind that coldness, something flickered—something fragile, almost shattered.

Why? He didn’t love me. The only reason he didn’t want the divorce was because he didn’t want to go through the hassle of negotiating another marriage contract. It wasn’t that he couldn’t buy another wife—he just didn’t see the need.

And yet, he looked at me like I’d betrayed him. His breathing grew ragged.

Whispers rippled through the crowd again.

“What’s happening? Cary didn’t even know about the divorce?”

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“Was he manipulated?”

“Maybe not manipulated. But honestly, who’d leave a man like Cary? Rich, sexy—she’s insane.”

“Maybe not insane. Maybe desperate. That poor woman probably had no other way out.”

Tanya’s face darkened. She hadn’t expected the crowd to turn in my favour. Suddenly, Vanessa stormed forward.

“Don’t let her fool you! She’s not the victim here!” she shouted, glaring at me. “You think you can play innocent? She spent the night in a hotel—with other men!”

“How do you know that?” I asked, feigning shock.

Her face paled instantly.

I took a step closer to Vanessa. “Or maybe you set it up?”

“It wasn’t me!” she stammered, trying to push me away.

“Not you? Then who?” I demanded, grabbing her arm.

Vanessa’s eyes darted to Tanya.

I saw Cary’s expression darken as he followed her gaze toward his mother. He started toward us, but Tanya was faster. She caught my arm first.

“If you say another word,” Tanya hissed under her breath, “you won’t get a single cent.”

Cary heard her. His eyes narrowed dangerously. “What money?”

Tanya’s eyes flicked away, guilt flashing across her face. But she quickly composed herself. Addressing the guests, she said smoothly, “As you can all see, my son Cary and Ms Galloway are already divorced. You’ve all seen the papers. I believe Cary’s shock comes from being too busy to remember signing them.”

“After all, this farce of a marriage has never been important enough for him to value or recall,” she added sweetly. “Isn’t that right, Cary?”

She looked at her son, expecting him to go along with her story, as always.

Tanya always thought she could control him, that her love was a form of power. She didn’t realise how much he’d grown to despise it.

Cary’s breathing deepened.

I looked at him steadily, silently praying—please, just go along with it.

If he did, I could walk away with what I came for.

The room fell into absolute silence. All eyes were on him.

Cary’s Adam’s apple shifted. Slowly, he straightened his tie, his posture changing as though he were putting his armour back on.

“Tonight’s engagement party,” he said finally, his voice cutting through the air like a blade, “was organised by Mrs Tanya Grant without my consent. I’ll be filing charges for identity fraud and misrepresentation.”

Tanya’s face turned ghostly white.

Cary paused, then continued, “And one more thing—the most important thing tonight. Hyacinth Galloway is still my wife.”

“That divorce agreement is null and void.”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 62:

Vanessa suddenly lunged forward and shoved me to the ground.

“You filthy bitch! Weren’t those men supposed to finish you last night? You should be dead!”

I hit the floor hard.

“Cary, she’s been tainted!” Vanessa screamed hysterically. “She slept with eight men last night! One of them has AIDS! She’s filthy, she’s ruined, she’s nothing but trash! How could you possibly still want her?”

Even from several feet away, I could smell the alcohol on her breath. Was she completely out of her mind?

The entire ballroom froze in shock.

I pushed myself up from the floor. “I was going to deal with you later,” I said coldly, “but since you insist on confessing in public—fine. You’re not only vicious, you’re stupid.”

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Then I turned to Tanya Grant. “This is the refined, well-bred daughter-in-law you wanted so badly? The one you’ll be visiting in prison someday?”

Tanya stood there, utterly speechless.

Cary’s expression was lethal.

“Why is everyone looking at me like that? Don’t listen to her!” Vanessa shrieked. “She’s the trash here! She’s sick—she has AIDS! Stay away from her or you’ll catch it too!”

Before anyone could react, Cary’s hand shot out and clamped around her throat.

He dragged her closer, his eyes blazing with fury. “What did you do to her? What the hell did you do?”

Vanessa choked, gasping for breath as her fingers clawed at his arm. For the first time, I saw real fear on her face.

Armond Abrams and another man nearby rushed forward, prying Cary’s fingers off her neck and pulling her behind them to safety.

“Cary, calm down!” Armond said nervously. “My sister’s drunk—she doesn’t know what she’s saying!”

Vanessa seemed to realise her mistake too late. Her tone softened instantly, turning tearful and pleading. “Cary, it wasn’t me! I didn’t do anything! It was a friend of mine—

she saw Hyacinth at Kingfisher Park going into a room. Then she saw several men follow her in. One of them is a notorious pervert, an HIV carrier!”

Her voice grew louder, feeding off her own lies. “I didn’t want to say anything, but she forced me! You two are already divorced, and she’s sleeping around! Cary, you and I—we’re meant to be together! She should’ve stepped aside long ago!”

Cary’s face was dark and unreadable. “Is that true?”

“I swear! I swear on my life! If I’m lying, may I be gutted alive!” Vanessa cried, her voice trembling with false conviction.

She looked straight at me, her eyes glittering with malice and triumph.

She thought I had no proof.

I met her gaze. “Gutted alive, dying in agony—remember what you just said.”

I pulled out my phone, tapped the screen a few times, and suddenly, Vanessa’s own voice filled the ballroom.

“Can’t you get it through your head? Cary doesn’t want to talk to you.”

“How do you like the men we picked for you? One of them has AIDS. Don’t even think about calling the cops. We can crush you like an ant.”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 63:

“From the moment you caught him cheating, Cary planned everything. He’s been lying to you this whole time. You already signed Tanya’s agreement. Once everyone sees you as just another whore, she won’t owe you a penny.”

“I’m engaged to Cary now. How does it feel? I took your man, your job, and soon I’ll have your life. You? You’ll just die miserably.”

As the recording played, Armond gestured for someone to grab my phone, but Cary moved faster—violently blocking them with a punch that made his intentions clear: anyone who touched me would die.

When the recording ended, silence crashed over the ballroom like a tidal wave.

Vanessa’s face drained of all colour. She trembled, retreating behind her brothers as Cary’s murderous gaze fell on her.

“Remember what you said?” I asked softly.

She flinched as if struck.

Then, with a trembling hand, she suddenly pointed straight at Tanya Grant. “It was her!” Vanessa screamed, her voice cracking with panic. “She made me do it!”

Tanya froze, her face the very picture of betrayal.

“No—that’s not true! I had nothing to do with this!” she protested wildly, her usual composure crumbling.

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She turned to her son, desperate. “Cary, please, not here. This is a private matter—we can talk at home—”

“No.” Cary’s voice was flat, unyielding. “We deal with this now. I want the truth. All of it.”

Even with her heavy makeup, Tanya’s face looked ghostly pale. For a woman obsessed with appearances, airing her family’s filth in public was her worst nightmare. Her heels wobbled.

“Cary—”

“The truth,” he repeated.

Her eyes darted toward me, pleading for mercy.

I ignored her, glaring coldly. Did she really think I'd show her any?

Tanya's gaze swept across the room—an audience utterly captivated, watching like they'd paid for front-row seats to a scandal.

Her jaw clenched. “She... she told me she had a way to make Hyacinth sign the new contract. That's why I... invited her to the hotel. But I didn't know she'd go that far! I thought she only meant to scare her—nothing more!”

“You liar!” Vanessa screamed.

I straightened up, brushing the dust from my dress. I'd had enough of their circus. Their so-called dignity disgusted me. All I wanted was what I was owed—fifteen billion dollars meant nothing to Cary, but Tanya would rather destroy me than let me have a single cent.

But I hadn't cheated. I'd survived. And now, I wanted her to see that.

“Enough!” I said sharply. “I don't care who masterminded this. I only care about one thing.”

I turned to Cary. “Whatever happens, our agreement still stands. I just want my divorce settlement.”

“You bitch! You violated the agreement! You’re getting nothing!” Tanya screamed, lunging toward me.

But before she could touch me, a strong arm yanked me backwards—straight into a solid chest.

My nose collided with warm muscle, and when I looked up at that familiar face, I froze in shock—

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 64:

“Mr Hastings!”

Different suit, different tie, but the same quiet authority—the same tall, commanding presence. He helped me to my feet.

“Miss Galloway. I hope I’m not interrupting.”

“Um, no, of course not,” I stammered, though what I really wanted to say was, What the hell are you doing here?

Lochlan Hastings must have read my mind. His tone was calm and courteous. “I happened to be nearby and heard someone questioning your story about last night. I couldn’t resist setting the record straight. I hope I haven’t caused you any trouble by stepping in.”

“No, of course not.” I forced down the ridiculous flutter in my chest. “If anything, I’m the one who’s troubled you, Mr Hastings.”

“Not at all. And call me Lochlan.”

Damn it, my heart skipped.

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That made three times he'd helped me now. First, the jacket in the rain. Then, saving me from the nightmare last night. And now, publicly clearing my name.

You'd need a heart made of tin not to be moved.

Lochlan turned to face the crowd. His voice carried clearly across the room. "Last night, it was me who helped Miss Galloway. I was at Kingfisher Park for a business meeting and happened to see her in distress. The men with her were acting suspiciously, so I alerted hotel security and we intervened. Luckily, we were just in time. Miss Galloway was not harmed."

He gave the perfect statement, neat and watertight—every word precise, nothing left open to gossip or doubt. He cleared my name and shut down the story in one go.

My heart gave a strange twist. He didn't need to involve himself in this mess. In fact, a man in his position shouldn't.

And yet...

Could Portia be right? Did he... like me?

The egotist in me nodded furiously. Of course he did. Why else would he keep turning up when I was in trouble?

The rationalist in me immediately shot that down. Don't be stupid. We barely knew each other. And I wasn't exactly the kind of woman who made a billionaire lose his mind at first sight.

I was still arguing with myself when a tall figure stepped into view, blocking my line of sight.

"Haven't you seen enough?" Cary's voice was a low growl. His broad shoulders filled my entire vision.

I frowned and stepped sideways. "You're blocking me."

He caught my arm and yanked me back. "Why do you keep staring at him?"

Because he saved my life, you idiot.

Before I could say it, Lochlan's smooth voice cut in. "Is everything all right?"

I tore my arm free. “Everything’s fine.” I gave Lochlan a small smile. “Thank you, Mr Hastings, for—”

“It’s Lochlan,” he reminded gently.

“Right. Thank you, Lochlan, for speaking up for me. I—”

“I don’t recall my mother inviting you, Mr Hastings,” Cary interrupted, his tone pure boardroom frost.

Lochlan smiled pleasantly. “As I mentioned, I was nearby for a meeting and heard my name come up. Thought I’d clarify matters.”

“Then perhaps you should get back to your meeting. Wouldn’t want to keep your clients waiting.”

Lochlan turned to me. “By the way, I received the suit. It fits perfectly. That was very thoughtful of you.”

“Oh, that’s fine. I’m glad it fits.”

“What suit?” Cary cut in again.

“Miss Galloway bought a suit for me,” Lochlan said mildly, then smiled. “But I’d better let you enjoy your party. Have a pleasant evening, Miss Galloway.”

“It’s Mrs,” Cary said bluntly.

Lochlan raised an eyebrow.

“It’s Mrs. She’s Mrs Grant,” Cary said, his jaw locked tight. “She’s my wife.”

“Ex-wife,” I corrected.

“We’re not divorced yet. You’re still my wife.”

“So you admit you’re a bigamist?” I nodded towards Vanessa, still being comforted by her family.

“I had no idea they were planning an engagement. It’s—”

“Tell that to someone who gives a damn.”

Lochlan’s mouth twitched, amused. He was openly watching us now, clearly entertained by the drama.

Heat rushed to my face. I didn’t need an audience for this train wreck. “Can I get you a drink?” I asked him, mostly to change the subject.

He started to reply, but the commotion at the door stole our attention.

Uniformed police officers pushed their way through the ballroom. “Vanessa Abrams? You are under arrest on suspicion of offences including, but not limited to, conspiracy to rape and administering a substance with intent. You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if—”

“What? I don’t—” Vanessa grabbed her brother’s hand. “Armond, help me!”

Armond’s face went thunderous, but unless he planned to physically assault the police, there wasn’t much he could do.

“Don’t worry,” I heard him say. “I’ll get you out.”

“Cary! Cary, help me!” Vanessa lunged for him, but the officers yanked her back and snapped the cuffs on.

Cary didn’t move.

“I didn’t do it! It’s not me!” Vanessa shouted, voice breaking. Then she spotted Tanya. “She’s in on it too! Take her!”

I stepped forward. “I’m the one who called you. Tanya Grant’s also involved.”

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Chapter 65:

The officer looked at me, nodded. “We’ll take her in for questioning. You’ll need to come down to the station to make a statement.”

“Of course.”

“Cary! Cary!” Tanya’s voice cracked. “Don’t let them take me!”

Cary looked torn, ready to step forward, but then his eyes met mine. He stopped dead.

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“I’ll get a lawyer to you as soon as I can,” he said quietly.

Armond came storming over, his face spelling murder. “Step aside. I need to talk to her.”

Cary blocked him. “No, you can talk to me instead.”

“Call off the charges.”

“Vanessa’s your fiancée.”

“She’s not. This party was arranged without my knowledge.”

Even from behind Cary, I could hear Armond’s breathing grow heavier.

“So you’re siding with that woman over Vanessa?”

“That woman is my wife.”

“You’d risk our entire partnership over a woman?”

“Speaking of which,” Cary said coolly, “thanks for the reminder. Our partnership’s off.”

A deathly hush fell.

Armond’s voice dropped to a dangerous calm. “I hope you know what you’re doing.”

“I do.”

Behind Armond, two men in black stepped forward.

Cary snapped his fingers. Four of his own appeared almost instantly. I recognised his regular bodyguards.

The standoff barely lasted a minute before Armond backed down. “This isn’t over.”

He left with the Abrams family. The rest of the guests quickly followed. Even the band had vanished.

The ballroom fell into an eerie silence.

It was just Cary, Lochlan, and me.

“About that drink,” Lochlan said lightly, as if the evening hadn’t just imploded. “Would you like to join me at the hotel bar?”

I nodded, still dazed.

Cary’s arm shot out, his grip hard on my forearm. “She’s not going anywhere with you.”

He was barely holding it together, shaking with fury—fury at his mother, at Vanessa, at me, at everything.

“I suggest you let go,” Lochlan said quietly, his eyes on Cary’s hand. “You’re hurting her.”

“Why do you care?” Cary snapped.

“Any decent man would care when a lady’s in distress.”

I struggled, but Cary’s grip was like iron.

“Let her go,” Lochlan said, voice dropping lower, colder.

“She’s my wife. I’m not letting her go anywhere with you.”

“Miss Galloway has already clarified that she’s no longer married to you.”

Cary’s fingers suddenly tightened so hard I cried out.

Lochlan stepped forward. “Let her go, or—”

Cary’s fist connected with Lochlan’s face before he could finish.

I screamed.

Lochlan stumbled back but caught himself quickly. He touched his cheek once, assessing the damage.

His bodyguards were on him in an instant. “Sir, are you all right?”

They glared at Cary, itching to return the favour.

“I’m fine,” Lochlan said, waving them off.

“I’m so, so sorry, Mr Hastings,” I stammered. My throat burned. The man had done nothing but help me, and he’d been rewarded with a fist to the face. “Please, see a doctor. Send me the bill. I can’t tell you how sorry I am for—”

“Not your fault,” Lochlan said quietly.

I met his eyes and begged him silently to leave before things got worse.

He looked at Cary’s hand still clamped on me. “Are you sure?”

“I’m sure. Please. I’ll contact you later.”

He gave me a long look, then turned and left with his men.

“You’re not contacting him. Ever,” Cary said, finally releasing me. “Let’s just go home.”

Maybe it was that word “home,” or maybe he realised I was too tired to fight. He stayed quiet the entire drive.

Once we were through the door, I said, “We need to talk.”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 66:

When I showed him the divorce papers again, Cary’s reaction was exactly what I expected.

He tore the papers into confetti. “I didn’t sign this.”

“There are backup copies,” I said calmly. “And backups to backups.”

He spun on me, eyes blazing. “I never agreed to a divorce.”

“But your mother did.”

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“My mother doesn’t fucking speak for me.”

I didn’t bother arguing. “You signed the papers, Cary.”

“You tricked me.”

“Doesn’t change the fact that it’s your signature. If you’re not happy about it, call a lawyer.”

He stepped forward until our noses almost touched. His breath hit my face, hot and furious.

“You’ve been planning this all along.”

“I have,” I said. “I want out.”

“No fucking way.”

If looks could kill, I’d already be a smoking crater.

“You said yourself what we have isn’t a marriage. It’s a transaction. And all transactions end eventually.”

“Not until I say so.”

I refused to back down at this point; I’d come too far. “Our marriage is a joke. You bought me with money. You’re ten times richer now than you were three years ago. You can afford an upgrade.”

“I said fucking no.” He shoved me into an armchair, fingers digging into my skin. “Fuck no.”

I hissed in pain. My voice wobbled. “If you’re worried about your reputation, tell the board about your engagement to Vanessa. Her family’s rich enough to suit—”

“There’s no fucking engagement!” His nostrils flared. I was half afraid he’d strangle me on the spot.

I tried to sound steady, even though my heart was hammering. “I could issue a statement if you want, to clarify things. I’ll say whatever you tell me to say. You can draft—”

The glass cabinet behind me exploded.

I screamed. Shards of glass flew up and sliced the back of my hand.

“I said fucking no! Didn’t you fucking hear me?” Cary’s fist was bleeding, but he didn’t seem to notice. “No one tells me what to do, no one!”

His wild eyes trapped me in place. “I can send my own mother to prison for trying to manipulate me. You want to find out what I can do to you?”

I shrank further into the chair. My forehead was damp with sweat. I swallowed hard, trying to breathe through the fear. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to tell you what to do. But could you... could you hear me out?”

He glared, but he didn’t punch anything else.

“I’m sorry I tricked you into signing the papers. I shouldn’t have done it, but—”

You’re damn right you shouldn’t have.

“Fine. I shouldn’t have. But what’s done is done. You’re the one who taught me to grab a good deal when I see one.”

“So you colluded with my mother, went behind my back, and tried to fucking divorce me without my knowledge?”

“I had no choice. She’s the only one who could help me.”

“Help you with what, exactly?”

“To live a life with dignity. Which I won’t have if I stay with you.”

Cary sneered. “Leave me, and you’ll be a penniless nothing.”

“That’s fine with me.”

Cary would never understand. It was never about the money.

“Right, I forgot. You won’t be leaving with nothing. You’ll have my mother’s money.” The contempt in his eyes cut me to the quick.

“Fine. I’ll give up the money. I’ll walk away with nothing. Would that make you happy?”

“No. What would make me happy is my wife staying my fucking wife instead of stabbing me in the back.”

“I don’t want to be your wife anymore!” I exploded. I shoved him back. “I’m done being the invisible wife whose husband fucks other women in his office in broad daylight!”

“Are you jealous?” Cary’s voice shifted, amused. He stepped closer again, eyes burning through me. “Is that what this is? You want me to stop fucking other women?”

A small, crooked smile curved his lips—a smile I didn’t understand.

“You want me to stop fucking other women because, what, you’re in love with me? Want to have me all to yourself?”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 67:

In love with him?

Maybe in the past, yeah.

But now...

Cary was no longer angry. He sounded smug now. “What if I told you I haven’t—”

“No!” I shoved him again. “I’m not jealous of anyone. I just don’t want to be your wife anymore. Can’t you tell I’m scared of you?”

That silenced him.

“You’re scared of me?” he asked at last, voice quieter.

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“You don’t let me go out. You dictate what I wear. You lose your shit if I so much as smile at another man. You almost throttled me to death at the party earlier.” I lifted my hand. It was still bleeding from the glass shards. “You did this. You hurt me.”

“It was an accident.”

Yeah, this time it was. What about next time?

He frowned. “If you’re worried I’d hurt you, I can add a clause in the contract—”

“Oh, fuck your contract! You think everything can be solved with paperwork, every part of your life filed and labelled. But life doesn’t work like that. People don’t work like that. I don’t want to live by a bloody contract anymore!”

“Fine. What do you want, then?”

“I want a divorce.”

“Not possible.”

“Do you want me to get on my knees and beg?”

“No. I want you to stay.”

“But I don’t want to stay.”

The anger was back in his eyes now. “Why not? Things have been fine for three years, and now suddenly you can’t take it. Why? What’s changed?” He paused. “Is this about that man?”

“What man?”

“Hastings.”

I laughed bitterly. “No. You keep tabs on me everywhere I go. You think I’d even have the chance to cheat?”

“Then why?”

I wanted to scream. To throw something. To grab him by the shoulders and shake him until he understood. “What would it take for you to agree to a divorce?”

“Nothing.” His tone was absolute.

“But if I don’t step aside, you can’t marry Vanessa—”

“I told you, there’s nothing between us.”

“Do I look like an idiot?”

He held my gaze. “Would you believe me if I told you I never slept with her? Or anyone else since we got married? Would you believe me if I said I could... fall for you? Would you stay then?”

I stared at him.

Was I hallucinating?

Was Cary Grant—the man who wrote “no affection” into our marriage contract—saying he had feelings for me?

I looked out the window, half expecting to see pigs flying past.

“You are joking.”

“I don’t joke. Answer the question.”

“Fine. The answer’s no. Even if you could develop feelings for me, which is a biological impossibility for you, I could never, in a million years, be foolish enough to fall in love with you.”

The lie hurt, but it needed saying.

I saw the blow coming a fraction of a second before it landed. It wasn't a wild swing, but a sharp, precise crack of his open hand against my cheek. The force of it wasn't what stunned me; it was the sheer, shocking reality of it.

He had hit me.

My hand flew to my stinging skin, my eyes wide with a betrayal so profound I couldn't speak.

And in his eyes, I saw my own shock mirrored. He was staring at his hand as if it belonged to a stranger, as if he couldn't believe what he'd just done.

The silence that followed was heavier, more deafening than any shout.

"Get out." The words were a hollow, frozen command, devoid of all the fire of a moment before.

I didn't need to be told twice.

I sprang up from the chair on shaky legs, shoved him aside, and ran.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 68:

Was that a crash I heard?

And a grunt?

I paused at the door, almost turned back to check if Cary was hurt. I'd shoved him hard. Had he cut himself on something?

But I didn't look back.

The study door slammed shut behind me, loud enough to make my heart jump.

I ran down the stairs, through the living room, and straight out the door.

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I didn't take any luggage. Most of my things had been moved out ages ago anyway.

I didn't stop running until my lungs burned.

"The Lauderdale Tower," I gasped, jumping into the first taxi I saw.

Once I could breathe again, I pulled out my phone and stared at my contacts.

I was leaving the country. Should I call my parents?

I'd told Mum I was going on a trip and would be out of contact for a while. I hoped she'd believed it.

What if Cary called her when he couldn't find me? What if he told them everything—the contract, the lies, the divorce?

I shook my head. No. Cary was too proud to air his dirty laundry.

I sighed and tucked my phone away. I'd talk to my parents after the trip, once I'd had time to think and get myself together.

Portia was waiting for me at my new apartment with my suitcase, neatly packed.

"Must you leave now?" she asked, frowning.

"I have to." I hugged her. "Thanks for packing for me."

"I'd have come with you if I could get away from work."

"I know. It's fine. Join me when you can."

She checked the airline app on her phone. “Your flight doesn’t leave for another four hours. We’ve got time.”

She made coffee for both of us.

The caffeine helped clear the fog in my head as I told her everything that had happened.

“Good for you,” she said when I told her I’d shoved Cary. “He deserved it.”

I wrapped both hands around my mug.

I didn’t feel good about it. Not one bit.

Which was odd, considering I’d been planning for this day for months.

Divorce was what I’d wanted, wasn’t it? A life free from Cary—his control, his temper, his endless parade of women.

So why did it feel like I’d just ripped out a chunk of my own heart?

“Holy shit!”

“What?” I looked up.

Portia shoved her phone at me. “It’s already all over the internet. Someone filmed Vanessa getting hauled off in handcuffs. Everyone knows the engagement’s off. Scary Cary’s name is trending with hashtags like #Bigamist, #Cheater, #Liar, #Scum—take your pick.”

She scrolled with glee. “Mayfair Global’s stock is tanking. People are demanding a public statement. Others say the Grants and the Abrams are finished. Oh, listen to this one: ‘He can’t tell the difference between a fiancée and a felony.’ Brilliant. I’m reposting that.”

I could tell she was genuinely happy for me. The more trouble Cary was in, the more it proved how right I was to walk away.

So why wasn’t I happy?

I’d lied to Cary. I’d lied to Tanya. I’d even lied to Portia. But the worst lie was the one I’d told myself, over and over, until I almost believed it: that I didn’t love him.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 69:

“What’s wrong?” Portia asked.

“Nothing.”

“Your face says otherwise. You should be celebrating.” She raised her coffee. “Here’s to your divorce. You’re finally free of that scary bastard.”

I forced a smile and clinked mugs with her.

Finally free.

Freedom for me also meant freedom for him.

He'd be free to chase whoever he wanted now, free to marry the woman who could actually make him feel something. Maybe it would be Vanessa. Maybe someone else.

But it wouldn't be me.

I was just a mistake—a blip in his otherwise perfect life that should've been erased long ago.

We'd come from such completely different worlds, the fact that our paths had ever crossed was a miracle in itself. Take where we first met. I was there trying to pay off Mum's hospital bills. He owned the hospital.

I worked three jobs to cover my uni fees. He ran six companies before graduation.

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I owned a nightdress that was five years old. He refreshed his wardrobe every quarter.

“Stop thinking about him.” Portia snapped her fingers in front of my face.

I blinked. “I wasn’t.”

“Liar.”

I said nothing.

“You’ve lived with him for so long it’s hard to picture life without him,” she said. “You just need to detox. It’s like quitting a drug. It’s hell at first, but you’ll feel better once he’s out of your system.”

“You’re probably right.”

“I know I’m right.” She tapped the back of my hand, where the cuts had scabbed over. “Scary Cary’s got an anger management problem. And he’s getting violent. He did that once, he’ll do it again.”

“Maybe.”

“He needs therapy, not a wife who puts up with him.”

I nodded and drained the last of my coffee. I didn’t want to talk about him anymore. “Let’s go.”

We went downstairs.

I was about to call a ride when a Mercedes-Maybach pulled up in front of the building.

“Miss Galloway?” The rear passenger window slid down.

I turned, startled. “Mr Hastings?”

“It’s Lochlan.” He smiled at me, then at Portia. “Good evening, Miss Pierce.”

“Good evening,” Portia smiled back, turning on the charm.

Lochlan’s gaze flicked to my suitcase. “Heading to the airport?”

“Yeah. Taking a trip.”

“I’m on my way there too. Let me give you a lift.”

“That’s kind of you, thanks, but I—”

Portia snatched my phone, cancelled the ride request, and grinned. “That’s mighty generous of you. Thanks for the offer.”

“Portia!” I hissed, elbowing her.

“Come on. It’s just a ride.”

But it turned out to be so much more than that.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 70:

I got to the tarmac just in time to see her disappear into Lochlan's private jet.

My Hyacinth. My wife. Boarding the plane of a man who'd worn the suit she'd bought him—the same man she'd sneaked off once to meet at that bloody golf course.

My hands tightened on the steering wheel until the leather groaned.

I could've stopped it. One call to the control tower, a quick security alert, a made-up threat. The whole airport would've shut down in minutes.

The old me wouldn't have hesitated.

But then I saw her eyes in my mind—those eyes that used to soften when she looked at me, frozen with fear in the study. That look stopped me cold.

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Since when did I give a damn what anyone thought of me? Especially a woman I'd acquired with a contract and a pen stroke.

Love. What a fucking nuisance. My mother, in one of her few sober moments, got that part right. It strips you bare. Makes you weak.

Here I was—Cary Grant, the man who moved markets and broke corporations before breakfast—sitting in my car like a fucking coward. All the billions in the world couldn't buy back the only thing that mattered.

Was this it? Had I really lost her?

Probably.

And the worst part was, I had no one to blame but myself. I pushed. I provoked. I flaunted vapid socialites in her face just to prove... what, exactly? That I didn't need her?

Genius move, that one.

And then I hit her.

The memory of that slap—the shock in her eyes, the way she flinched—branded itself into me.

What the fuck had I done?

Where the hell do you go from that?

I called Portia. All I got was smug satisfaction and the sound of a champagne cork popping down the line. She actually celebrated her best friend’s “freedom” from me.

As for where Hyacinth was going—or what she was doing with Lochlan—not a single word.

I called Hyacinth. She didn’t answer.

I thought about going to her parents, but what would I even say? That I’d driven their daughter away with pride and stupidity?

So I went home, got drunk, found the nightdress she'd forgotten to pack—the only thing of hers left behind. I buried my face in it, inhaled her scent, got myself off to it, drank some more, and finally admitted what I'd been too proud to say out loud.

I'd made a fucking huge mistake.

The next day, I didn't go to work. Hungover and pathetically hollow, I did something I never thought I'd do.

I booked a session with a therapist.

A Harley Street one, obviously.

I sat in that ridiculous armchair and told a complete stranger everything. How I'd manipulated Hyacinth into marriage. How I'd staged makeout scenes with other women just to get a rise out of her. How I'd used jealousy like a weapon. How I'd fucked her senseless the night she asked for a divorce because I was so fucking terrified she'd leave if I let her talk.

Dr Forbes earned my respect when, halfway through, I tried to stand up and leave. My hangover was wearing off, and pride was kicking back in. But she didn't politely ask me to stay. She ordered me to sit my arse down and keep talking.

So I did. The next day too. And the day after that.

She was the only therapist I'd met who poured whisky mid-session, probably because she knew I couldn't tell the truth sober.

By the end of the first week, she gave me her verdict. No fancy jargon. Just the blunt truth.

"It's all your fault."

She said if I'd told Hyacinth the truth early on—told her I'd fallen for her instead of hiding behind that stupid fucking contract—things would've been different. Maybe we could've become a real couple.

"But what if she doesn't feel the same?" I asked.

Laying myself bare only to have her shrug it off would've gutted me. Pretending I didn't care was easier.

Dr Forbes gave me a look I couldn't read. Maybe pity. Maybe contempt.

"That question," she said, "only proves you don't understand women. If she didn't care about you—if she was really with you just for the money—she'd have emptied your bank accounts and vanished before the end of the first year. I know I would've, if I'd married a

pig-headed ice man like you. You wear your pride like armour. It protects you, sure, but it also keeps everyone out.”

I stared at her. “So what do I do now?”

When it came to sex, I knew what I was doing.

When it came to feelings—when it came to her—I was a bloody idiot.

“Should I go find her?” I asked.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 71:

I already knew where she was. I'd been tracking her all week like some deranged stalker, calling in favours, checking her socials at three in the morning.

"No," Dr Forbes said firmly. "Stay away. Give her space."

"I've given her a week." I hadn't slept properly since she left. Her nightgown was half disintegrated from overuse.

Dr Forbes eyed the bags under my eyes with something almost kind, then said coldly, "That's not enough. She's terrified of you. If you show up now, she'll just run again."

"Fine."

Truth was, I was terrified too. Terrified of what I might do if I saw her again—especially if she was with that smug bastard Lochlan.

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The thought of her with him made something inside me snap.

After I left Dr Forbes's office, I touched the back of my head. The bump had finally faded.

That night in the study, after she shoved me and ran, I'd hit my head on the edge of the desk and blacked out.

I woke up in a pool of my own blood.

If not for that, I'd have caught her long before she ever reached that damn plane.

Maybe that was karma. Maybe I deserved it after what I did to her.

"Back to the office," I told my driver.

Work, whisky, and revenge. These were the only things that still numbed me.

Speaking of revenge, I called my mother's lawyer. "Do what you can for her case, but I'm done with her. She's not to contact me again."

She'd had a hand in hurting Hyacinth. Thinking about what could've happened to Hyacinth in that hotel room—with those men, that syringe—it took everything in me not to cut my mother out completely.

“Mrs Grant insists on speaking with you,” the lawyer said nervously. “She asks that you visit her at the detention centre.”

“The answer's no,” I said. “If she keeps pushing, tell her I'll freeze her accounts, cut off her lawyers, and strip her of the Wentworth Estate.”

“Understood, sir.”

Then I called a different lawyer—one who worked in the shadows. “How's the Abrams situation?”

Ever since that bastard Armond made his threat at the party, I'd been dismantling his empire piece by piece.

He could come after me all he wanted. But Hyacinth was off limits.

Scandals, leaks, regulatory hounds—I threw every dirty trick I knew at his company until he had no time left to breathe, let alone retaliate.

“The Abrams Group is enormous, sir,” the lawyer said carefully. “But with a few more weeks, it’ll crumble.”

“Good. What about Vanessa?”

I’d made sure she was denied bail, and I intended to keep it that way.

“She’s facing additional charges. Prison’s looking likely.”

“Good.”

Night fell.

Back home, the silence was suffocating.

Past midnight, I was still in the study. I might as well live there now. Without Hyacinth, the bedroom was just another cold space.

I scrolled past spreadsheets and merger files until I found the one thing I’d kept hidden.

A video.

Hyacinth, in the garden at Wentworth, laughing at something I'd said. Unfiltered. Unposed. Beautiful.

I'd recorded it secretly, a thief stealing a moment of pure light. She'd burned our wedding photos. This video was all I had left of her.

Her laughter filled the room. I stared at her face until my chest physically ached.

I reached for the Louis XIII and drank.

But alcohol couldn't fill the emptiness she'd left behind.

I grabbed my phone.

"Get me the Singapore files," I told my assistant.

Work. It was the only thing left. The only thing I could still control.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 72:

“Thank you.”

I stepped out of the Grab car and immediately got punched in the face by a wall of hot, dense, suffocating air. After a week in Singapore, I still hadn’t adjusted to the humidity. It was a violent shift from London’s cool, misty mornings.

“Can I help you with those?” the hotel doorman asked with a bright, professional smile.

“No, thanks. I can manage.” I smiled back, hauled my shopping bags out of the boot, and headed into the lobby.

The shopping trip was long overdue.

I had landed in Singapore with a suitcase full of thermal underwear, windproof jackets, and hiking boots, and had only survived the week thanks to an emergency dash to a department store.

Not that I could have known the destination would be switched from Iceland to Singapore.

When Lochlan offered me the role of his Chief of Staff, I'd accepted before he could change his mind. Since I was already on his private jet, there wasn't much point saying no when he asked me to tag along for this business trip.

The moment we landed at Changi, Lochlan switched straight into work mode: meetings, factory inspections, keynote speeches at summits. And naturally, as his staff, I was also flat out, going non-stop.

Only after joining his company did I realise Velos Capital was just one subsidiary. The Hastings family was a textbook example of a multigenerational dynasty, capital accumulated over centuries. They had begun as private moneylenders, evolved into a private bank, then in the 1990s moved into real estate. From there they branched out into renewable energy, entertainment, film production, and the internet. They had six listed companies alone.

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The Singapore branch we were visiting was the energy company, recently assigned to Lochlan's care.

There was so much to learn and adapt to that I barely had time to adjust to jet lag, let alone indulge in post-divorce misery. Which was a blessing, because it meant I hadn't had time to think about Cary. Or that slap in the study.

I stepped into the lift and swiped my keycard.

Lochlan travelled with a team of four staff, plus me, and we each had our own room. Mine was a suite, probably because I was the only woman on his staff.

I had just tossed my shopping bags into the closet when my phone rang.

"I'm on my way back. Is the boss ready to go?" asked Kai Parker, Lochlan's scarily efficient business secretary.

I checked my work tablet. The next meeting was in an hour, and we had twenty minutes of travel time allocated. "I'll go check."

I called Lochlan's suite. No answer.

I took the lift to his floor and knocked. Nothing.

I hesitated, then used the spare keycard. Every staff member had one since his suite doubled as our office space and we held meetings there.

The living room was empty. The office too.

That meant he was still in the bedroom.

I paused outside the door. Normally Roy or Kai handled wake-up duty, but neither was at the hotel.

I knocked. “Boss?”

Silence.

I tried the handle. The door opened.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 73:

Well, I was already here, and getting him ready was part of the job.

I stepped inside. “Boss, you’ve got a meeting—”

The rest of the words died in my throat.

Lochlan was spread out on the king-sized bed, the blanket tossed aside. He was wearing a silver silk robe, half-open at the chest, showing his collarbones and the hard planes of his chest. His legs were long and toned, sculpted to perfection like they’d been designed by software. He looked indecently perfect.

I knew I should look away—but only after my eyes had finished memorising the exact contours of him.

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His very toned, very sexy contours.

Technically, he was dressed. Sort of. And technically, I had a job to do. He'd given me the keycard. I had a right to be here.

Didn't change the fact I felt like a shameless voyeur.

I cleared my throat and reminded myself why I was here.

"Boss, time to wake up."

He didn't stir.

Even a man with his seemingly endless reserves of energy had to be exhausted after yesterday's marathon schedule.

"Boss. Mr Hastings. Lochlan?"

Lochlan frowned in his sleep, then relaxed again. Still dead to the world.

I cleared my throat louder. "Boss, it's five o'clock. You've got a meeting in an hour."

He stirred, irritation flickering across his brow. He lifted an arm and covered his eyes. Then he went still again.

I checked my watch. Five-oh-eight. He needed time to shower and change, and I had to brief him before we left. Singapore's rush-hour traffic was a form of torture.

I raised my voice. "Boss. Wake up."

Nothing.

I moved closer, bent down, and shouted right next to his ear, "WAKE UP!"

A hand shot out as if to swat away the noise. I ducked, forgot I was in heels, my ankle twisted, and I lost my balance. My body tipped sideways and would have landed right on top of my boss if I hadn't flung out an arm to steady myself.

Except I wasn't bracing myself on the bed.

My palm landed on silk first, then on warm, solid muscle beneath it.

For one deranged second, I forgot this was my boss. My very exact, usually distant boss. All I registered was heat, strength, and the steady thud of a heartbeat under my hand. I wanted to keep it there. To just feel.

Someone cleared their throat. Not me.

My head shot up, and my lips brushed a jaw with the faintest scratch of stubble.

Had I just... kissed my boss?

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Chapter 74:

Praying he was still asleep, I raised my head—and locked eyes with Lochlan’s pale, clear stare.

There was nothing sleepy about him. He was fully alert.

I snatched my hand back as if burned and straightened, staring intently at the headboard, at the pillow, anywhere but his face. “Um, boss, time to get up. You’ve got a meeting in an hour.”

Then I bolted.

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I didn’t stop until I was back in my own room.

I splashed cold water on my face. The girl in the mirror looked like she’d run a marathon in a sauna. My face was blazing red, my eyes shiny with some feral gleam.

How had a routine wake-up call turned into an accidental kiss?

I scrubbed my face with cleanser as if I could scrub the memory out of existence.

It didn’t work.

The feel of his jaw under my lips, the ghost of his scent, the mix of silk and warm muscle... every detail was seared into my brain.

When Lochlan finally came down to the lobby, I couldn’t look him in the eye. My gaze slipped to his jaw, now clean-shaven. I forced myself to look away and instead found myself staring at his Adam’s apple.

Get a grip, I told myself.

As I gave him the pre-meeting brief, I fixed my eyes on the monogrammed cufflink on his sleeve.

He took the tablet from me and scanned the data.

Kai walked into the lobby.

Early thirties, sandy hair, slim build, always collected. He'd been working with Lochlan for years. Surely he'd done wake-up calls before.

Had anything like that ever happened to him?

My brain immediately conjured an image of neat, perfectly presented Kai tripping into Lochlan's bed and face-planting into him.

Absolutely not.

Mind, get out of the gutter! I shouted internally and shook my head to physically rid myself of the vision.

"What's wrong?" Kai asked. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Nothing. Just thinking. Busy week."

"You get used to it," he said with the weary calm of a veteran.

I edged closer and lowered my voice. "You spend a lot of time in hotels. Did you ever..."

I didn't get to finish the question.

Lochlan stood and headed towards the lobby doors.

I had to jog to keep up with his long strides.

The meeting was at ONE°15 Marina Club.

As Roy steered the car through rush-hour traffic, I sat rigid in the back seat, pretending to be a mannequin.

It didn't help that Lochlan was right beside me. Our thighs were so close they might as well have been touching.

All I could think about was those thighs clad in silk pyjamas not even an hour ago. And that kiss. Why couldn't I wipe it from my memory?

"Hyacinth."

I almost leapt out of my seat. "Yes, boss? What do you need?"

“Water.”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 75:

“Right.” I reached into the mini-fridge, unscrewed a bottle of Evian, and handed it to him.

He passed it straight back. “Drink.”

“Hmm?”

“Take a deep breath, drink, and relax. And maybe stop obsessing over every little slip-up at work.”

The setting sun cast a gold glow around him, lighting the edges of his hair and lashes.

“Thank you.” I took a long drink.

A dull ache rose in my chest. The contrast was impossible not to feel.

Three years ago, on my second day at Mayfair Global, I had messed up a basic admin task. With no experience and the wrong degree, I had been bound to trip up.

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Cary's response?

“If you can't even handle something that basic, what use are you? Maybe I should've kept you at home.”

I had spent the night in the office fixing the error.

“We're here,” Roy said from the front.

I blinked away the memory and got out of the car.

Roy stayed behind while Kai and I followed Lochlan up the gangway.

The yacht was a gleaming, three-deck luxury vessel, all pristine white and polished chrome. The first deck housed the business meeting rooms. The second was pure entertainment, with a pool stretching across the deck. The third contained guest suites, and above that was a private lounge with panoramic views.

Albie Di Grasso came forward to greet us. The sixty-four-year-old shipping magnate clapped Lochlan on the arm, his wrinkles deepening with delight.

Inside the lounge, around a dozen guests were mingling—high-profile figures.

Among them stood a petite girl with glowing skin and a beaming smile.

“Olivia, come and meet Mr Hastings,” Albie called. He turned to Lochlan. “My granddaughter. You two went to the same university. You probably have a lot to talk about.”

Kai and I exchanged a smirk behind Lochlan’s back.

Olivia’s eyes lit up with instant infatuation. She practically glowed at Lochlan like a sunflower tracking the sun.

“If Mr Di Grasso had said he was bringing his granddaughter, boss probably wouldn’t have shown up,” Kai murmured.

I murmured back, “Why not? Who says you can’t mix business with pleasure? They might actually hit it off.”

“Not a chance. She’s not his type.”

“Oh yeah? You sure?”

“I mean, I—” Kai stopped mid-sentence. His eyes snapped to the dock. His tone changed. “I didn’t know she was going to be here.”

“Who?” I followed his gaze.

A woman approached the yacht. Tall, slender, with smooth black hair cut to her shoulders, wearing a black satin slip dress and carrying a tiny clutch. She looked like she’d stepped out of a fashion editorial: cool, elegant, lethal.

“That’s Jaclyn Lemon, the local division GM,” Kai said, already moving to greet her.

So that was Jaclyn.

I'd frequently seen her name in the files, but I hadn't expected her to be that stunning.

"Ms Lemon," Kai greeted her.

"Kai." She gave him a cool nod. "Long time."

Her eyes slid past him and landed on me. They went several degrees colder. "This is...?"

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 76:

I smiled politely and offered my hand. “Hi, I’m Hyacinth Galloway, Mr Hastings’s Chief of Staff.”

If her expression had been frosty before, it turned glacial now. “Chief of Staff. You mean secretary,” she said, the contempt in her voice as delicate as it was unmistakable.

“I suppose you could call it that.” I held the polite smile. I’d been called worse.

She ignored my hand and swept past us, every step trailing ice.

“What’s her deal?” I asked Kai.

He let out a slow breath. “She’s practically family. Her mum is close with Mrs Hastings. She and the boss have history. On again, off again, that sort of thing. Complicated.”

“Ohhhh.” I nodded. “Got it.”

Was that why Lochlan had chosen Singapore as his first stop?

The yacht was leaving the marina.

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Kai and I made our way back to the main saloon.

Lochlan was surrounded by guests, giving everyone his full attention. He managed to make each person feel seen. His smile was warm without being performative, his posture relaxed without ever losing authority.

Where Cary dominated a room with force and intimidation, pushing his agenda through sheer will, Lochlan drew people in. Talking to him made you feel as though you were basking in sunlight after a long winter.

He could discuss the dial texture of the new Submariner with a diving enthusiast, then pivot into a conversation about petroleum extraction techniques with a Brazilian tycoon, and by the end of it, have two fresh meetings locked in.

Even when Olivia fluttered around him, openly angling for his attention, he treated her with charm and good humour, but gave her nothing to misread. When she suggested drinks—just the two of them—he declined so gently she beamed anyway.

I stayed in the corner, observing, absorbing, fascinated. The only person not smiling was Jaclyn.

She hovered near Lochlan, close enough to suggest familiarity, engaged in conversation but visibly tense every time Olivia laughed too loudly or touched Lochlan's arm.

So what exactly was going on here?

Were Lochlan and Jaclyn currently off? If so, why had he brought the team to her territory?

Lochlan treated both women with identical politeness. No favour, no softness. If he had once cared for Jaclyn, he had either moved on, or he was very good at pretending.

My eyes flicked back and forth between them, my brain rapidly plotting several versions of this love triangle. Possibly quadrangle.

Lochlan turned and caught my eye. There was a warning in his gaze.

Oops. If he could read minds, I was in trouble.

"Kai, mind if I slip out for a bit?" I whispered.

“Go. I’ve got this.”

“Thanks.”

I retreated to the aft deck and sank into a chair.

The waves rolled beneath us. The skyline shimmered in the night like a mirage of gold dust scattered across water. The yacht swayed gently, rocking me with a lulling rhythm that eased tension from my shoulders.

I took in a deep breath of cool, salted air. The breeze tasted metallic and clean.

I pulled my old phone out of my bag. I had switched it off after arriving in Singapore and bought a new phone for work. The second I powered it up, the screen exploded with notifications. Over a hundred missed calls: my parents, Portia, old colleagues, headhunters.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 77:

And Cary.

My inbox was filled almost entirely with messages from him.

At first calm, then increasingly frantic, then losing control.

The last voicemail had arrived five minutes ago.

His voice was low, roughened, as if he had been shouting or drinking.

“Hyacinth, I screwed up, okay? I messed up. I’m an idiot. I don’t deserve you. I’m sorry. Please give me another chance. If you need space, take it, just... just know I’ll be here waiting. I’m waiting for you to come back. I can’t go on—”

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I powered off the phone.

I was wrong; one week wasn't nearly long enough for me to be ready to face him.

I wasn't sure how long I had been there until Kai came to find me. "They've moved on to the card room on the second deck."

We headed down.

The air was thick with cigar smoke. Waves of laughter rose and fell over the clatter of chips. The table was crowded with ultra-wealthy players, some flushed with victory, others pale with ruin. A stunning dealer flicked cards with expert precision while waiters drifted by with trays of champagne and whisky.

Lochlan sat among them, the only one without a cigar. A glass of champagne rested untouched beside him. He looked immaculate, utterly composed. Judging from the towering stack of chips in front of him, he was winning.

Jaclyn was seated next to him, elbow on the table, head propped up on one hand. Her eyes were hazy and unfocused.

She looked like she was one blink away from passing out.

“She’s had too much. She needs fresh air,” Lochlan said.

Kai and I went to help.

“I’m fine,” Jaclyn muttered, pushing our hands away.

Kai hesitated, wary of touching her, so I stepped in.

I slipped an arm around her waist. “Come on, let’s get you some water.”

“Don’t touch me!”

She shoved me hard. I stumbled backwards, and Kai caught me.

Every head at the table turned.

Lochlan rose to his feet. “Take over for me.”

With one steady arm around Jaclyn, he guided her to the exit.

I looked at Kai. He looked at me.

“Was he talking to me or you?” we asked at the same time.

“I don’t know how to play Texas hold ’em,” Kai said. “I guess that makes it you.”

I took Lochlan’s seat.

And immediately felt a meaty palm on my arm.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 78:

Lucas Gottesman: Brazilian oil magnate, net worth in the high twelve figures, famous for uncanny market foresight and a talent for seizing golden opportunities the rest of the world overlooked. That was what his file said.

What the file neglected to mention was that he also liked to seize any woman within reach.

His meaty, damp palm was on my arm. I could feel every sweaty ridge of it against my bare skin and instantly regretted wearing a short-sleeved dress.

“Ever played Texas hold ’em? I could teach you,” he said, smiling in a way that made my skin crawl. It wasn’t the charming grin he’d used on Lochlan. This one was slick, predatory, and self-satisfied.

Beneath it, I caught the same thinly veiled condescension I’d seen in Jaclyn’s eyes when she’d learned I was just a “secretary.”

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“Thank you, but I know the rules.” I smiled back, keeping my expression just this side of civil.

The croupier finished dealing the hole cards.

Gottesman... no, at this point he was Grossman to me, leaned closer. “Now, look at these two ladies in front of you, dear. They’re going to need a strong hand like mine to show them the way.”

He was sitting so close I could taste the cigar smoke and whisky on his breath.

“Fold,” the player two seats down muttered.

I reached across my chip stack to call, moving sharply enough that my elbow forced Grossman’s hand to slide off my arm. It looked accidental.

It was not.

“I can handle my own ladies, thank you, Mr Gottesman. I call.”

He matched the bet, but his attention was clearly no longer on the cards. “You call? Such a soft play, sweetheart. It’s a man’s game. Let me show you how to play it properly. We can move to my suite. Play a version with fewer... layers, if you catch my drift.” He winked.

There were five other men at the table, plus the croupier. No one reacted. No one even looked up, as if it was completely normal for a billionaire to proposition a woman in the middle of a high-stakes game, as if him leering openly at my cleavage was just business as usual.

I pretended I hadn’t heard him.

The croupier burned a card, and the flop came out. More betting.

Grossman, maybe annoyed that I wasn’t rising to the bait, played aggressively, forcing the pot higher. I called. Again.

Again.

Final round.

“You’ve had a good run, secretary,” he drawled. “But this is where the big boys finish up. All in.”

I matched the bet without flinching. “I think,” I murmured, “I’ll just have a call here.”

Grossman flipped his cards with a flourish, revealing a king-high straight. “You lose, darling. See, that’s how it’s done.”

I turned over my cards.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 79:

The croupier announced, “Full house. All chips to the lady.”

I exhaled with relief. Winning wasn't the point. Not losing Lochlan's money was.

Grossman didn't care that he'd just lost six figures. In fact, he seemed amused. He signalled for more champagne.

"You're a clever girl, Miss..." He squinted at me, failed to recall my name, shrugged, and gave up. "A clever, beautiful girl. You could make far more with me than at this little table. Forget the cards. Come upstairs."

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My hand was on the deck for the obligatory cut. I resisted the urge to launch it at his obnoxious head. I smiled pleasantly and imagined him hospitalised with acute alcohol poisoning.

"That's a very generous offer, Mr Gro... Mr Gottesman. But my boss keeps us running quite hard. We've got a late-night meeting. I wouldn't want to be late."

Grossman gave an oily laugh and knocked back more champagne. "Ah, the boss. A lucky man. With a pretty thing like you at his side, I'm sure he runs you very, very hard, yes?"

I ignored him, but I couldn't control the angry flush that spread from my cheeks all the way to my neck and ears.

It had been a while since I'd dealt with this kind of sleaze. Back at university, I'd worked three jobs and had seen every variety of creep: leering customers, handsy colleagues, one boss who offered me a month's pay for a quick shag in his office.

All of that had evaporated the moment I joined Mayfair Global. I'd thought it was because of corporate standards and HR policy.

Later, I realised it was because everyone believed I was Cary's lover. And no one was stupid enough to harass the boss's woman.

Cary might have been cold and frightening. But he never allowed anyone else to disrespect me.

The thought caught in my throat like a stone. I swallowed hard and focused on the table. The croupier dealt the next round.

Grossman reached for his card and let his fingertips brush against my hand. Goosebumps erupted along my skin. I snatched my hand away.

A steward approached with champagne.

“No, thank you,” I said quickly.

“She’ll take one,” Grossman interrupted. He gestured imperiously. “A lady must always celebrate her winnings. Pour her one.”

The flute was set down beside me. I ignored it.

Grossman leaned in closer as the flop came down. As I bent forward to study the cards, I felt his hand settle on the small of my back, fingers pressing firmly just above my arse.

Revulsion shot through me. Every muscle tensed.

He lowered his voice. “The cards are getting interesting now, secretaria. Are you still sure you wouldn’t rather be playing my game upstairs?”

I balled my hand into a fist.

Punch him, I’d probably lose my job.

But if I didn't punch him, I'd lose my dignity and my breakfast and lunch.

To punch, or not to punch?

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 80:

“Mind if I take your place?”

Kai gently nudged me out of my chair.

“You don’t know how to play the game,” I said, before I remembered he was trying to help me out of a tight spot.

“I’ve been watching for a while. I think I’ve got the hang of it.”

I smiled as he took my seat. “Hi, Mr Gottesman. I’m new at this. Hope you can give me some pointers.”

Standing behind him, I gave my colleague a grateful smile he couldn’t see, turned, and walked out of the suffocating room. I felt Grossman’s eyes on my back the entire way, and heard him ask Kai, “What’s her number?”

I got out of the room and headed down the stairs to the aft deck, but the cooling sea breeze did nothing to calm the heat and fury raging inside me.

The stuffy air in the room had given me a slight headache, and I realised the heat rising in my cheeks wasn’t only from anger. I kept walking blindly, not caring where I was headed as long as I kept moving.

Stupid Grossman, stupid billionaires, stupid card games. I cursed everyone and no one in particular.

Was this what I would have faced back when I'd first joined Mayfair Global if I hadn't been Cary's rumoured girlfriend?

I knew I was young and reasonably good-looking, with a fit body, but did that automatically make me fresh meat in the eyes of every man with a beating heart and a working cock?

Grossman had been all polite smiles and polished business-speak when he was talking to Lochlan, but the moment my boss left the room, the mask came off.

Did he think he was entitled to treat me as nothing more than a pair of tits and a perky arse just because I was a secretary and not a billionaire? Was that how he treated his own secretaries? Did he think I was Lochlan's PA during office hours and his plaything after dark?

I stomped my heels on the deck, not caring if it dented the teak. Striking out on my own without Cary's professional network or his protection was proving harder than I'd expected, and I suspected tonight's experience was just the beginning.

But I would not go back to Cary.

I clenched my fists and picked up my pace. I could do this. I could build a life with dignity, have a fulfilling job, and make something of myself without Cary's shadow over me.

Stairs loomed ahead. I climbed them absently and only realised I had reached the third floor when I saw the white sofas arranged in clusters, the gleaming bar, and the man and woman locked in a tight embrace.

Jaclyn Lemon was standing on tiptoe, her arms wrapped around the waist of a man whose back was to me. The bespoke charcoal suit was alarmingly familiar.

So were the trousers, the shoes, the haircut.

Was that Lochlan making out with Jaclyn?

I almost choked on my own saliva, my heels skidding to an abrupt stop at the threshold.

Was there anything more mortifying than walking in on your boss mid-makeout?

Possibly, but I couldn't think of anything in that moment. I turned and bolted, praying the carpet was thick enough to muffle the sound of my fleeing footsteps.

When Lochlan returned to the card room some time later, I was sitting behind Kai, playing the role of consultant.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 81:

I had wanted to disappear somewhere quiet, but if Lochlan came back and saw I was gone, it would only draw attention.

Maybe he hadn't seen it was me, I prayed.

His serene expression gave nothing away.

Kai let out a breath of relief when he saw Lochlan and immediately stood to vacate the seat.

“Sit,” Lochlan said.

Kai grimaced. “I’m really not good at this, boss.”

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Lochlan glanced at the stack of chips next to Kai. “You seem to be doing pretty well.”

“That’s not me—” Kai began.

“Not him,” Grossman cut in, his words thick with alcohol. “That’s the work of the pretty lady over there.”

I plastered on a polite smile and silently cursed Grossman to slip and crack his skull in the bathtub later.

Lochlan looked at me.

“I played a few rounds earlier,” I said.

“A few rounds? She nearly cleaned out my wallet tonight.”

Grossman patted his stomach and wheezed a laugh. “Not that I mind losing to a girl like her. Smart, gorgeous, with a body that’ll make any red-blooded man—” He caught himself, chuckled, then added, “Where on earth did you find her, Mr Hastings? I was wondering if you’d like to make a trade.”

“A trade?” Lochlan said, his voice dropping a few degrees.

“Yeah, a trade.” Grossman gestured loosely. “Like a secondment. I loan you my secretary, you loan me yours.” He leered. Alcohol had stripped away what little self-control he had. “Hell, I’ll trade five of mine for her. I’ll even give her a raise.”

“You have two options, Mr Gottesman. You can apologise immediately and keep your eyes on the cards, or I will personally ensure your oil extraction company never secures another pound of funding in this city. Choose your consequence.”

The room fell silent at once.

Grossman blinked, sobriety slamming into him as he mumbled something that vaguely resembled an apology.

“No offence taken,” I said with a matching fake smile.

I threw Lochlan a grateful look, but his eyes were elsewhere. He seemed distracted.

Was he thinking about Jaclyn? Or that makeout session I had very much not seen but could never now unsee?

What exactly was going on between them?

I didn’t want to pry, but Lochlan had just helped me. Again. I had lost count of how many times he had stepped in for me. If there was any way for me to return the favour, I would have done it in a heartbeat.

The problem was, he seemed to already have everything.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 82:

The men played a few more rounds before calling it a night.

As the yacht pulled into the dock, I saw Olivia Di Grasso approaching Lochlan with a megawatt smile. “Can I have your number?”

“Sure.” Lochlan inclined his head, but before Olivia could break into an ear-to-ear grin, he gestured toward me. “My chief of staff can give you my card.”

“Oh.” Olivia’s smile faltered.

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She made her way to me, shoulders drooping just slightly.

I silently pitied her. We both knew her grandfather already had Lochlan's business line, but she wanted his personal number—and if he had intended to give it to her, he would have done it already.

I handed her Lochlan's beautifully embossed, custom-made business card with a courteous smile and mentally said, Sorry, can't help you.

The boss clearly had something going on with Jaclyn, and as his all-purpose chief of staff—which, fine, was really just a fancy title for secretary—it was part of my job to ensure his private life stayed private.

"Thanks." Olivia accepted the card and, despite the blow to her ego, quickly pulled herself together. She chatted cheerfully with me for a while, though every second of it was a transparent attempt to see if I would slip and reveal anything about Lochlan.

I kept the conversation light and friendly. I genuinely liked her, but I was not about to sell my boss out for gossip points.

"She's got no chance," Kai commented after Olivia bounced away.

"Why not?" I said. "I like her. She's outgoing, affable, easy to like."

“Here’s why.” Kai tipped his chin toward the stairs.

Jaclyn was coming down slowly, gripping the rail as if the world had suddenly doubled in gravity. Her face was flushed, her eyes glassy.

When it came time to disembark via the gangway, she stopped and looked directly at Lochlan, expectant.

Lochlan glanced at Kai and me.

We both immediately looked down and pretended to be deeply engrossed in our tablet and phone.

We’d both learned our lesson about offering unsolicited assistance.

Lochlan paused, probably mentally docking our pay, then held out his hand.

Jaclyn seized it and leaned her entire body weight onto him as though her legs had stopped functioning entirely.

Roy was waiting with the car.

“Where’s your ride?” Lochlan shifted slightly, trying to adjust her clingy grip.

“No clue,” Jaclyn mumbled, eyes shut as she slumped into his chest, her breasts pressed shamelessly against him.

Kai and I scrambled into the car and immediately pretended to be checking email.

Lochlan steadied Jaclyn by the shoulders. “We’re not headed the same way. I’ll call you a ride.”

Jaclyn let out a pitiful little sound.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 83:

I felt sorry for her, despite her earlier disdain toward me. Lochlan was being the perfect gentleman, as he always was, but I doubted that was what Jaclyn wanted—especially not after they had just kissed.

“I don’t want you to go,” she said, her words thick with alcohol and grievance. She clung even tighter, arms wrapped around his waist. “Don’t push me away again. You gave me up to another man because he...” Her voice hitched. “But you never asked what I wanted.”

I kept my gaze firmly on the tablet on my knee, but my ears were practically plastered to the window.

Another man? Who?

“We’ve been through this,” Lochlan said. A flicker of impatience coloured his tone. “You made your choice, Jaclyn. You can’t have everything.”

“I don’t want everything. I only want you.”

“Heard enough?”

I jerked my head up to find Lochlan looking directly at me, his pale eyes unreadable. “Call a ride for her,” he said.

“I’m on it, boss.” I whipped out my phone.

But it was post-dinner rush hour, and the dock was miles from the city centre.

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“Nearest car is twenty-five minutes away, boss.”

Lochlan frowned.

Jaclyn had her head buried against his neck and her arms clamped around his waist. I did not fancy the task of peeling her off him.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to leave Miss Lemon here alone.” I got out of the car and looked around. The dock was growing darker by the minute, and while Singapore was generally safe, Jaclyn was drunk, beautiful, and vulnerable.

“What are you suggesting?” Lochlan asked.

“We should take her back to the hotel and get her a room for the night.” She probably had her own place in the city, but extracting that information from her in her current state would take until dawn.

“Since it’s your bright idea, you’re in charge of her.” Lochlan gently pushed Jaclyn toward me.

I caught her and nearly toppled over. I shot Kai a look for help. He raised his brows in apology: You’re on your own.

With no other option, I manoeuvred Jaclyn into the back seat and climbed in after her. Lochlan got in beside me.

The car pulled away from the dock.

The Mercedes-Benz S-Class was supposedly spacious, but I was starting to doubt that as I found myself sandwiched between a slumping Jaclyn and the solid, lean bulk of my boss. Her jasmine perfume and his citrus-and-woodsmoke cologne mingled in the air, while the heat radiating off both of them pressed against me from either side.

I decided the middle seat was my least favourite place in the world.

As the car exited Sentosa Gateway and swung sharply onto Keppel Viaduct, the turn came hard and sudden.

A gasp burst from my throat as the world tilted. Jaclyn toppled onto me, I lurched sideways like a falling domino, and the next thing I knew, the breath was punched out of my lungs as my shoulder and breast collided squarely with the unyielding heat of a male thigh.

My hand shot out instinctively to steady myself. Instead of finding the seat, it landed on something taut, warm, and undeniably—catastrophically—masculine.

Lochlan's deep, involuntary grunt confirmed the horrifying reality: I had just grabbed my boss squarely by the crotch.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 84:

Before I could yank my hand back in appalled reflex, the car swerved around another bend, sending Jaclyn crashing harder into me.

I was completely flattened. My face ended up buried in the smooth, expensive cotton of Lochlan's trousers. My hand—which I was still desperately trying to detach from its shocking position—was now trapped.

I was wedged between two human bodies: a drunk woman who might vomit at any second, and my boss, who could fire me in a heartbeat.

As if that was not bad enough, I could definitely feel the hard, illicit pressure of Lochlan's arousal, unmistakably prominent beneath my fingers.

No! a hysterical corner of my mind shrieked. I did not just face-plant into my boss's crotch.

My cheeks burned so hot I was surprised they didn't scorch straight through his trousers. An embarrassed, hysterical giggle tried to escape me, but it was smothered by a wave of pure, molten heat.

Lochlan's entire body was rigid beneath my weight, his breath held tight. He didn't move the hand now clamped over mine, trapping it in the most compromising place imaginable.

"Sorry, boss," Roy said from the driver's seat.

The long, agonising bend eventually straightened. The car levelled, but the tangle of bodies did not.

"I am so sorry!" I tried to scramble up, but Jaclyn's deadweight still pinned me down, and all I managed to do was wriggle slightly, grinding my front against Lochlan in a movement that, to my absolute horror, felt less like an escape attempt and more like a deliberate, teasing stroke.

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His breathing hitched. His grip on my wrist tightened, nearly painful.

"Do. Not. Move," Lochlan said, his voice a low, gravelly command that went straight to my newly divorced, newly awakened core.

He stretched his free arm across Jaclyn's shoulders to push her upright. But as he moved, his legs shifted too, and I was certain I felt the shape of his balls against my cheek.

Lochlan grunted. He shoved harder. With the help of another sharp turn in the opposite direction, Jaclyn finally slid to the other side.

I sprang up as if the leather had scorched me. I snatched my hand back and tucked it firmly beneath my thigh. I could still feel the searing imprint of him against my palm.

I risked a glance at Lochlan. He was adjusting his suit with slow, contained movements, but the muscle ticking in his jaw gave him away.

"Are you all right?" he murmured, his voice lower and rougher than it had been all night.

It was a redundant question. We both knew I was absolutely not all right. My cheeks were burning, and a searing heat had ignited in the pit of my stomach, spreading fast through my veins. It was the kind of heat that made me forget entirely where I was. Or who I was.

I sat back and smoothed my dress, breathless, acutely aware of every inch of my skin.

"Yes," I lied, my voice slightly shaky as I fixed my gaze on the approaching skyline rather than the man sitting beside me. "Sorry about that."

Yes, I decided again, the middle seat was definitely my least favourite place in the world.

We got back to the hotel in forty minutes, but to me it felt like forty years.

I hauled Jaclyn out of the car.

I was starting to like the woman less and less by the minute.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 85:

If not for her, I wouldn't have face-planted into Lochlan's crotch, wouldn't have buried my face practically in his balls, wouldn't have realised just how horny I was one week post-divorce. I was a normal woman with normal sexual needs. But for years, I never had to worry about expressing them, much less fulfilling them, because Cary's sexual energy was so immense. With him, I got more than satisfied without ever having to ask.

My problem had always been trying to find a discreet way to get him to tone it down a notch, not worrying about my own needs being ignored.

It was only now, post-divorce, that I'd discovered my own sexual appetite was very much alive.

And, to my profound mortification, that inconvenient realisation was brought on entirely by the unfortunate incident of my face making utterly inappropriate contact with my new boss's crotch.

I still couldn't look him in the eye, and I prayed I'd still have a job in the morning.

Jaclyn was slim, but she was taller than me and drunk and completely uncooperative. As I struggled to get her through the hotel's front door, she dug her heels in like a petulant child.

Kai and Roy stood off to the side, offering me helpless shrugs that clearly said they wanted to help but didn't want to be branded perverts or sued for harassment.

A long arm shot out, stopping Jaclyn from slumping to the floor.

“Jaclyn, I know you’re not drunk. Cut the act.”

It was the first time I’d heard how icy my boss’s voice could be. His patience had clearly run out.

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Jaclyn opened her eyes and looked at him with hurt and bitterness. Her eyes misted, as if she were trying her best not to cry.

I tried to sidle away. This was definitely not a scene I wanted to be in.

“Hyacinth.”

Lochlan’s voice stopped me in my tracks.

Reluctantly, I turned back. “Yes, boss?”

“I said she’s your responsibility.” He pushed her back into my arms, then strode straight toward the lifts without a backward glance.

I sighed and turned to Jaclyn. “Miss Lemon, I’ll get you a room for the night.”

She was staring after Lochlan like an abandoned puppy.

“Miss Lemon?”

She finally looked at me and stretched her lips into a humourless smile. “No need. I have a reserved suite here.”

That was confirmed by the concierge, who approached with a broad grin. “Miss Lemon, it’s so good to see you again!”

Relieved, I handed her off to him and headed up to my own room.

It wasn’t even nine o’clock, but it had been one long night. I sighed, picked up the terrycloth robe, and headed for the bathroom for a much-needed bath.

But I never made it that far.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 86:

A call from the boss summoned me to his floor.

I took the lift, silently begging it to slow down, mentally bracing myself for whatever awaited me. I was ninety percent certain Lochlan was going to fire me. Honestly, I'd consider myself lucky to get away without a sexual harassment lawsuit.

"Loch, open the door."

Jaclyn was outside Lochlan's suite. The concierge was nowhere in sight.

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I paused in the corridor.

"I want to talk to you," she insisted. "I'm not leaving until I do."

I almost turned and walked straight back to my own room, but a text from Lochlan stopped me: [Come in.] How did he know I was here?

I sighed, put my phone away, and forced myself forward.

Jaclyn's pitiful pleas stopped at once when she saw me. Her head whipped around and she narrowed her eyes. "What are you doing here?"

"Boss's orders," I said. I didn't owe her an explanation, but it was the fastest way to move things along.

She was blocking my way.

I gestured. "Could you...?"

Reluctantly, she stepped aside, still watching me as if I were a criminal sneaking into a crime scene. I knocked twice. "Boss, it's me. Hyacinth."

"You have a keycard," came the reply.

Right. I'd forgotten.

I fished the card out, feeling Jaclyn's glare searing into the back of my hand.

"Why do you have his keycard?" she demanded as I swiped it.

I opened my mouth to answer.

"Get in," Lochlan said through the door. "Just you."

I shrugged at Jaclyn, offered a fleeting, apologetic smile, then slipped inside and gently shut the door on her crestfallen face.

Lochlan was in the middle of the room, taking off his suit jacket.

It was a simple action, nothing overtly sexual about it, but I couldn't look away. The way his fingers moved with precise control over each button, the way his shoulders and arms flexed beneath the fabric, the quiet confidence in his movements as he hung the coat on the rack and stepped toward me.

As his scent reached me, my eyes involuntarily drifted south of his belt. I swallowed.

An unbidden scene flickered into my mind: the jealous ex walking in just as the powerful boss pulled his secretary into a heated kiss, designed to make the ex even more jealous. It instantly reminded me of Cary and that blonde woman with the big tits in his office.

I shook my head, trying to banish it. I did not want to become that blonde.

"Why are you shaking your head?" Lochlan asked.

"Um, nothing. Just a fly," I lied, silently apologising to the hotel manager for slandering his housekeeping standards.

“I need you to...” Lochlan paused, studying me. “Why is your face—”

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 87:

“What, is it?” I touched my cheek. It was burning. I gave an awkward laugh. “Oh, I ran up the stairs.”

“Why? Lift breakdown?”

“No. Wanted some exercise.” I piled flimsy excuse on flimsy excuse, because any excuse was better than the truth: that I had been thinking about my boss’s crotch.

If he knew I was lying, he didn't call me on it. Instead, he said, "Show me the schedule for the next month."

"Oh, right." I whipped out the work tablet, which I never went anywhere without, and pulled up the calendar.

Earlier tonight, while Lochlan networked, Kai and I took notes on the meetings he'd secured during conversations and liaised with the secretaries of the other participants to lock down the dates, times, and locations.

Kai was still showing me the ropes. Once I got the hang of it, I'd be responsible for all of Lochlan's overseas schedules.

Lochlan took the tablet and studied it. "Cancel the meeting with POGO Sol."

"Got it." I was already drafting an email when the realisation dawned on me.

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POGO Sol was owned by Lucas Gottesman. Grossman.

A highly unprofessional question slipped out before I could stop it. “Is it because of what happened tonight? Because of...”

Had Kai told him what happened?

Lochlan gave me a level look. “I don’t do business with people who can’t control their primal impulses. A reliable partner is one who exercises control. He clearly does not.”

I nodded.

We went through the rest of the schedule quickly.

Lochlan was an easy boss to work with.

Not that he wasn’t demanding or exacting; he was exacting to a fault.

But he was also incredibly patient. If I made a mistake, he wouldn’t just point it out. He would walk me through the solution, making sure I didn’t waste time fumbling around in the dark. He even asked how things had been done at Mayfair Global, then explained the differences between that system and Velos Capital.

The only catch was that he wouldn't tolerate the same mistake twice.

After years under Cary, who had been impatiently demanding and expected immediate results the second he gave an instruction, working for Lochlan felt like stepping out of a fog.

"That's all." To my surprise, he didn't hand me back the tablet when we were done. "You can go. And you don't need to come in for the morning briefing tomorrow."

My heart sank.

You can go = you are fired.

So I was being let go, after all.

I wanted to beg him to reconsider, to ask for forgiveness, but I couldn't bring myself to do it.

How could I? What would I even say? That it was an accident? That I didn't mean to grope his crotch with my face? That it was partly Jaclyn's fault?

I stared at the carpet, dejected and crushed.

Working for Lochlan had turned out to be so much better than I'd expected. It had been informative and instructive. In fact, if I had money, I would be willing to pay for the chance to work for him and be mentored by him. Not to mention, I needed the salary.

I thought of the huge gap between what I currently had in the bank and what I needed to repay Cary for my mother's hospital bills, and I felt tears pressing behind my eyes.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 88:

I got my job at Mayfair Global because of Cary. This was the first real job I had earned on my own merit, with just my CV and experience—not because of my connection to him. Was I going to lose it barely a week after I’d started?

The soft wool of the carpet blurred as tears pooled in my eyes—

“Is there anything else?” Lochlan asked when I remained rooted to the spot for a long time.

I hastily blinked back the tears. “No. I just wanted to thank you for the invaluable experience. It has been such a privilege and pleasure to work for you. I don’t think I can find another boss as tolerant as—”

“Wait.” Lochlan stepped closer. His voice held evident surprise when he saw the tears in my eyes. “Are you crying? Because what, you think you’re getting fired?”

“Am I not?” I looked up, desperate for any shred of hope.

“Why would you think that?”

“Because... well, because of...”

“Because of the incident in the car?” Lochlan gave a chuckle that was half amused, half exasperated. “You think I’d fire you over an accident you couldn’t control? If that were the case, Roy would be the first one I’d fire. He was the one behind the wheel, after all.”

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“Oh.” My heart fluttered, hope spreading warm and bright through my chest. I could breathe again.

“I have certain expectations of my staff, yes, but I’m not an autocrat. I don’t punish anyone for accidents or unintentional mistakes.”

Lochlan’s words were sweet music to my ears.

I looked at him, hoping my eyes could convey the gratitude I couldn’t articulate.

Lochlan watched me, amusement flickering in his eyes. “Now that we’ve cleared that misunderstanding, would you kindly shut the door on your way out so I can have my bath?”

“Of course, of course!” I nodded far too quickly. “Wait, but... you said I didn’t have to come in for the briefing tomorrow.”

“That’s because you’re having the day off. You and Kai and Roy—all of you. I’m taking some personal time.”

“Right, of course. Okay, got it. Thank you, boss. Good night, boss. Enjoy your bath, boss.” I practically skipped toward the door with a spring in my step, then paused. “Oh, um, I think Miss Lemon is still out there.”

Lochlan glanced at the door, his pleasant expression dimming. “I’ll deal with her.”

I left his room.

Jaclyn was slumped against the wall opposite, glaring at me as I emerged.

I was so relieved by the news that I still had a job that I didn’t even mind her attitude, so I gave her a bright, beaming smile.

She frowned, confused.

“Good night, Miss Lemon.” I danced toward the lift.

The next morning, I slept in late until hunger woke me. I'd barely had any food last night on the yacht, and my stomach was impatiently reminding me to get calories.

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Billionaire Boss Nah, Just a possessive husband!

Chapter 89:

I ordered room service and, since the company was picking up the tab, I ordered the full breakfast platter.

With time to burn, I wandered through the hotel, intending to go out and explore later, when the sun wasn't blasting down cancerous rays.

The hotel itself was worth exploring, with its long covered colonnades and fluted Victorian columns. The air in the Palm Court felt thick, heavy with tropical heat and the lush scent of jasmine and rain-washed stone.

I snapped a photo of the polished brass plaque marking a historical corner, intending to send it to Portia later. I rounded a white column near the entrance to the spa facilities.

And I stopped dead.

Lochlan was emerging from the side corridor marked discreetly for Wellness. He was dressed in white, expensive workout gear, a small gym towel slung over his shoulder, his shirt clinging slightly to the sculpted breadth of his chest. His usual polite, measured composure was softened by a flush of exertion, and his London-polished formality hadn't yet settled back over him.

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I gulped, suddenly more nervous than I should have been.

Maybe that had something to do with the wildly inappropriate dream I'd had last night—one that featured me, a man whose face alternated between Lochlan's and Cary's, and positions that would make an acrobat's jaw drop. Even now, my cheeks heated at the memory.

"Hyacinth? You okay?"

His voice was low and close, his breath warm.

Snapping back to reality, I took a step back, turning away from his face, which had triggered an onslaught of vivid, erotic images I very much did not need to be entertaining in daylight.

I didn't need to touch my face to know it was burning. "Just the sunlight. Too bright. Got a bit dizzy." I cleared my throat. "Morning, boss."

"We're not at work. Call me Lochlan."

"Right. Morning, Lochlan. So, um, been working out?" I asked the dumbest possible question.

Lochlan let out a light "hmm," wiping the sweat from his brow. He seemed serious about working out; the schedule Kai handed me had at least ninety minutes blocked off daily for exercise.

"You were on the third floor of the yacht last night," he said suddenly.

"Huh?"

“When Jaclyn and I were... talking, you walked in, then left.”

I winced. I had been hoping he'd forgotten about that by now.

“I didn't mean to spy, sorry. I was just wandering and somehow ended up there by accident. But I left immediately! I didn't see anything, I swear. And I won't tell anyone.” I mimed zipping my lips.

“What do you think you saw?”

“Um, nothing?”

He stared at me. He said we were not at work, but his tone had switched firmly to boss mode.

I caved. “I just... I saw you two making out, okay? I'm sorry, and I promise I won't tell anyone.”

“You saw wrong.”

Chapter 90:

“What?” I looked at Lochlan.

He looked back evenly.

“Right.” I nodded quickly. “I saw wrong. Nothing happened.”

Who my boss kissed was none of my concern. I was his chief of staff, not his social secretary.

For some reason, my mind went straight to Cary again. If, as his legally married wife, I couldn’t control who he kissed in his office, I had even less say here, as Lochlan’s employee.

Lochlan squinted slightly. “You don’t believe me.”

Was my skepticism that obvious?

“I do. I do. Totally.”

“I didn’t kiss her. She tried to make advances, but nothing happened. Certainly no kissing.”

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“Right. Got it.” I nodded like a bobblehead, desperate to end this line of conversation.

“Jaclyn and I are not a couple. Our families go way back. She’s a friend, a colleague, nothing more.”

“Got it.” My cheeks were starting to hurt from smiling. Why was he telling me this?

“I’m not romantically interested in her. Or any other woman, as a matter of fact.”

“Okay, noted. Got it—” My head froze mid-nod.

Wait, what?

He was not into Jaclyn. Or any other woman.

What did that mean?

He was not into women?

Was he... into men?

But hadn’t Kai said Lochlan and Jaclyn had some on-again, off-again drama?

I stared at Lochlan’s too-handsome face.

Maybe it wasn’t a case of either. Maybe he didn’t like anyone. Maybe he was like Narcissus, too self-sufficient to ever need another person.

But no, he didn’t strike me as that vain. Then what was it?

Was he aromantic?

Or was his primary relationship with his job, like so many CEOs who considered romance an inefficient use of time?

When I blinked back to reality, Lochlan was already gone. I shook my head.

Why was I theorizing so much about my boss’s love life?

Whatever his preferences were, they had nothing to do with me.

On Monday morning, Roy drove us to the headquarters of the Singapore branch.

Jaclyn wore a crisp white business suit, looking sharp and professional, with no trace of the lovelorn girl from the previous weekend.

Her greeting was oddly formal. “Welcome, Mr Hastings. It’s an honour to have you here.”

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